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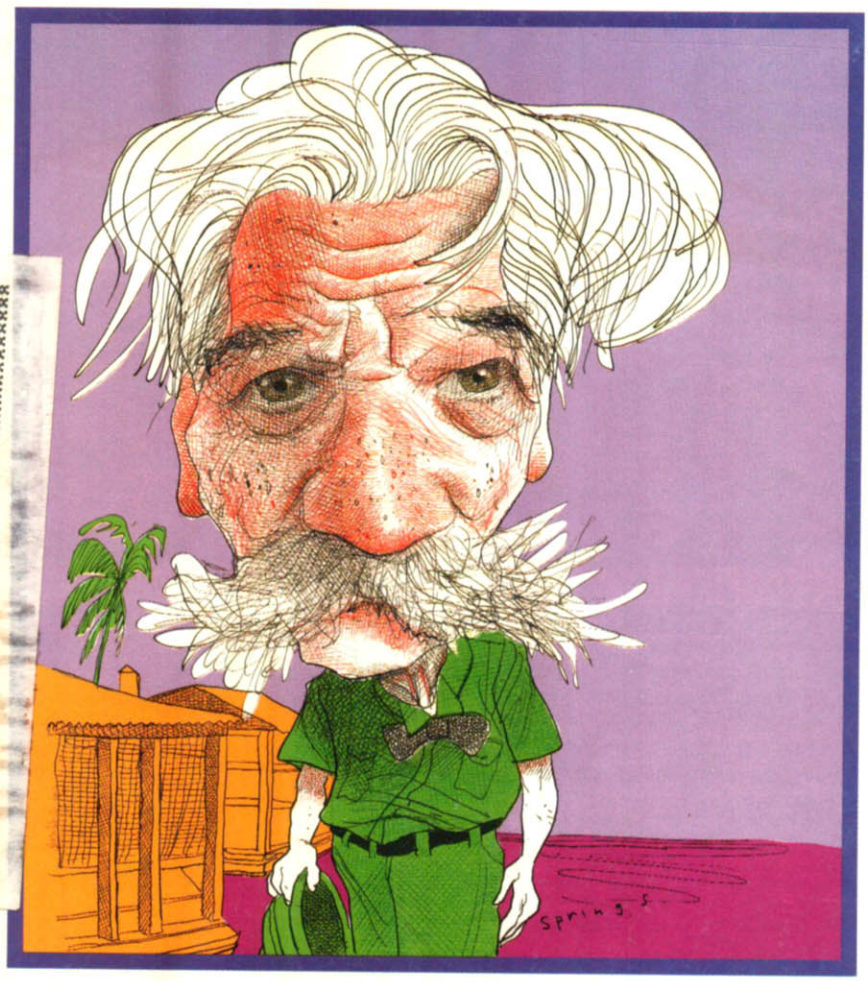

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What are the facts?

A totally new concept. The concept of "land for peace" is a totally new one in the history of the world. It was formulated for one specific purpose only, namely to persuade and pressure Israel to give up territories that it has administered since the Six-Day War of 1967. By its victory in that war, Israel wound up in possession of these territories. Contrary to what many are led to believe, the "West Bank," the focus of today's attention, had never been part of any Arab country. It was part of Palestine, a territorial unit that, by the Mandate of the League of Nations and in line with the Balfour Declaration, had been designated as a national home for the Jewish people.

> "A new idea, perhaps even a good one...but it needs to work both ways to be valid and effective."

Thus, while the concept of "land for peace" is a brand-new one, the concept that to the victor belong the spoils is as old as history itself. Our own country, of course, following its Manifest Destiny, has benefited greatly and has consolidated its territory by applying this motto. But Israel followed a different path. From the day of victory in 1967, it waited for an offer of peace from the Arabs. But that offer never came.

Should be 2-way street. In 1977, President Sadat of Egypt traveled to Jerusalem and presented a peace plan to the Israeli government. The Israelis eagerly embraced his suggestion. In exchange for peace and normalization of relations with its neighbor, Israel returned to Egypt the vast Sinai peninsula, together with the city of Yamit; some of the most advanced military installations in the world; the port and naval installation of Sharm-el-Sheik, and the oil fields that Israel had developed. And, of course, Israel also gave up the natural buffer against aggression that the Suez Canal and the strategic depth of the Sinai itself provided. It was a first in history. Never before in the chronicle of mankind had the victor returned conquered territory to the vanquished in order to attain peace.

One would expect that the concept of "land for peace" would work both ways. After all, should not the Arabs also make some territorial sacrifices for peace? Unfortunately, that is not the case. Every inch of land held by the Arabs is considered "holy Arab soil" and its possession by the "infidels" (Christians or Jews) is inadmissible. No compromise, no concession is ever possible.

Conflict is with Arab nations. The "land for peace" formulation is now applied mostly to Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank"), the Gaza region and the Golan Heights. Israel's foes, but also some of its friends, urge Israel to yield these regions to the Arabs, in exchange for "peace." But no peace will come about by Israel's giving up these areas of vital strategic importance to those who are its sworn enemies and who have declared over and over again that they wish to use these lands as their launching pad for the final attempt at the destruction of Israel. The conflict in the area is not only between Israel and the Palestinians. It is first of all between Israel and the Arab nations. With the single exception of Egypt, virtually all of them are still in a state of war with Israel.

To none of the Arab countries has the possibility ever occurred of *their* trading land for peace, for instance yielding the "West Bank", Gaza and the Golan Heights to Israel for the sake of peace. There isn't even a gesture of accommodation, such as a lifting of the Arab economic boycott against Israel, an apology for the odious slander that Zionism is Racism, or a discontinuation of the yearly charade in the United Nations, in which the Arab states attempt to expel Israel from that body. For the victor to yield land for peace to the vanquished is a new idea—who knows, it might even be a good one. But it surely would have to work both ways in order to be valid and effective.

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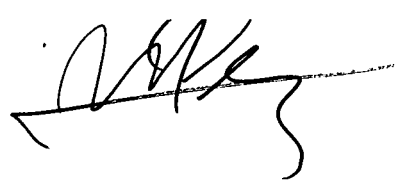
ABOUT THIS MONTH

by

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski

HOW IS IT THAT SOMEONE so universally admired for his sharp and brilliant mind as Bill Clinton invariably finds a way to insult our intelligence? When he finally got around this fall to explaining the "field trip" he took to Moscow during his antiwar days, he brushed aside any suggestion that he might have been duped by the KGB and its informers. Hell, he said, he spent lots of time visiting with students at the University of Moscow, most of whom "were even then very much anti-Soviet, anti-Communist folks." The line was about as cynically flippant as his telling *Rolling Stone* that he and everyone else who opposed the Vietnam war "wanted to serve our country; we wanted to be part of patriotic wars." For those too young to recall, the antiwar movement had already chosen its patriotic war—Hanoi's! And one did not remain a student at a Soviet university very long for confessing anti-Communist feelings to a visitor from the West—particularly to a spokesman for a politics that openly derided the very notion of anti-Communism. Better than Clinton these students knew who might be serving the interests of the KGB.

IMAGINE CLINTON'S CAVALIER response if he'd been asked about the history of the Communist threat to the United States—and American Communist party support for the Kremlin in the years leading up to the Cold War. My guess is he'd have called the CPUSA's members patriotic, idealistic, democratic, perhaps a little misguided, but no doubt anti-Soviet folks even back then! Thanks to the recent opening of the archives of the former Soviet Communist party—and to scholars of the caliber of Harvey Klehr and John Haynes (see "The Comintern's Open Secrets," page 34)—it's going to be much harder to explain away the disloyalties of the American Communist movement. Given all the light being shed these days on past Soviet crimes, whether the Katyn Forest massacre or the destruction of KAL 007, the only question that's not being addressed is why the official Soviet position on these atrocities always received such enthusiastic backing from sharp and brilliant minds in the West. Our search for answers should keep us in business a lot longer than Bill Clinton.



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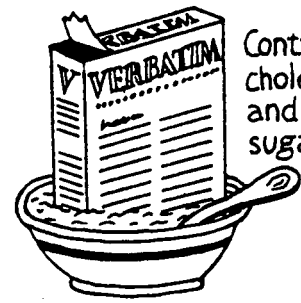

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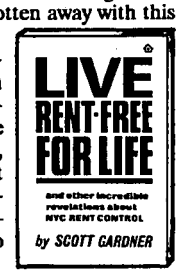
Have you ever wondered:

What warped motives inspire a city with a critical housing shortage to pass a law that drives apartment building owners out of business? What fiscal folly makes this city spend an exorbitant $2,000 a month to house homeless families in fleabag hotels while perfectly usable buildings (the same ones the city confiscated from those bankrupt owners) stand empty a few blocks away? And what perverse logic makes this city guarantee that its richest citizens pay the lowest rents?

The culprit in each case is Rent Control; the so-called humanitarian law that makes normally sane cities self-destruct. But even more disturbing questions must be asked: How can a blatantly socialistic law like rent control continue to exist right here in the land of free enterprise? How have liberal politicians used controls to repeal our Constitutional rights of private property and gotten away with this scam for so long?

On the 50th anniversary of rent control in New York, treat yourself to "Live Rent-Free For Life," an incisive, unforgettable look at this nation's most insidious law. Not available in bookstores. To order send $11.95 to:



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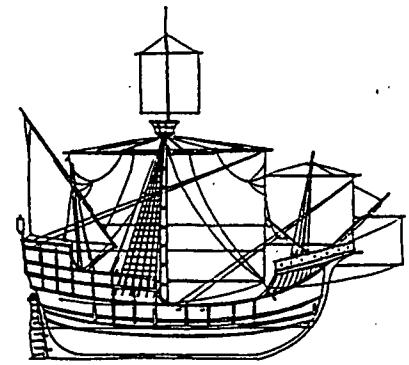
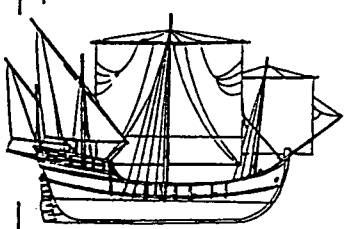
Should We Celebrate or Repent?

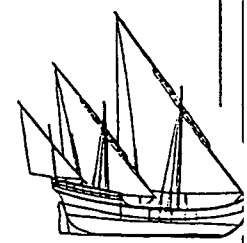


The 500th anniversary of the first voyage of Christopher Columbus has spurred a host of attempts to recast the history of the Americas. Many of the revisionists are trying to use the past as a tool to advance "politically correct" goals. In doing so they profoundly distort the historical record of Columbus the man and of the societies that have sprung from his explorations.



For many critics, the presence of evil in American history totally discredits the "myth" that the United States is a just society. Indeed, they have made the Columbus anniversary an occasion to reject all of Western culture. At the other extreme, many defenders seem to think that any criticism of the United States will lead to total denunciation.

Robert Royal examines the available facts about Columbus and the Spaniards, their first New World contacts, Christian missionaries, North American Indian tribes, and the early British and French settlements. His wide-ranging accounts of the complicated interaction between Europeans and Native Americans suggest that little of the early cultural mixing in the Americas can be characterized in strict black-and-white terms.



Universal ideas of human rights and international law that slowly emerged from Western reflection on indigenous peoples, Royal concludes, are major contributions for which we should all be grateful.

Robert Royal is vice president and Olin Fellow in Religion and Society at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

1492 AND ALL THAT
Political Manipulations of History
ROBERT ROYAL

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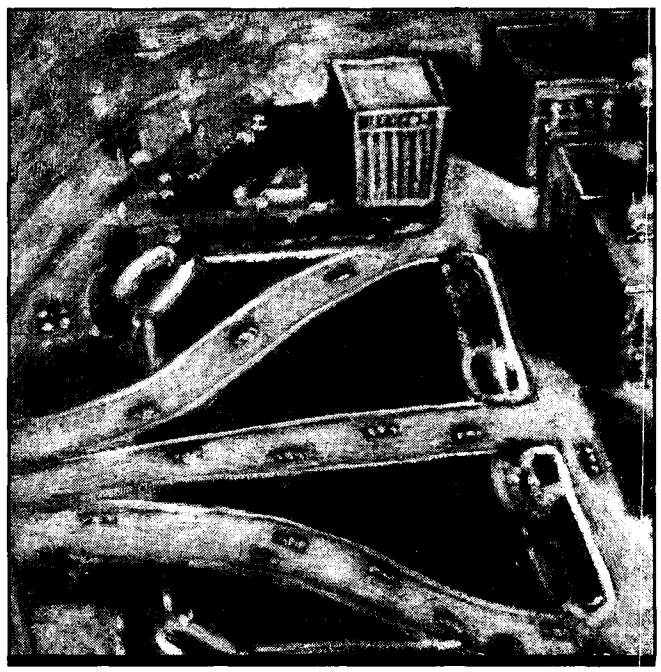

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Cover illustration by John Springs. Interior art by Jake Tapper, David Turner, and John Springs.

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• As dread October gave way to November and execution day, President Bush spent the final week of his hapless campaign racking up bonus miles on Air Force One during last-ditch trips to such crucial precincts as South Dakota, Montana, and New Mexico. It was a heroic odyssey, and an awfully lonely one, as the President who had abandoned all remaining links to conservatives and his own Vice President was in turn abandoned by same, not to mention all those Republicans running for dog-catcher, coroner, and United States senator. It's a wonder the President retained the loyalty of his Air Force One pilots and stewards. Never one to be outdone, Mr. Bush presented last-minute economic ideas evidently hatched in Little Rock. His first priority upon re-election, he said in Denver, would be renewed spending on public works, to "get those steam rollers moving quickly." Throw in a few more sales of F-15s and F-16s, and we'll have a foreign policy as well. And ask Ross to look into reports coming out of South Korea that a few of the passengers of KAL 007 may still be alive in the former Soviet Gulag.

• In an election that was to decide our nation's future once and for all, it figured that schoolchildren would replace Reagan Democrats as the critical swing vote. The always reliable poll of *Weekly Reader* regulars had Mr. Bush winning handily, 56 to 39 percent. As revealed in letters to the editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the President also won unexpected support among the eighth graders of the Robertson School in Daly City, California. Although star pupil Barry Ward stayed true to Clinton—"he goes around the United States and visits all kinds of people in different environments"—a number of his classmates offered compelling reasons for preferring the incumbent. Chevette Francillette argued, "I think if anyone is going to vote, they should vote for Bush. At least we know what he does. I personally would rather not vote at all." For Roxana Galdamez, it was a question of charisma: "Bush's face looks honest." As for Margaret Pese, it was a matter of two minds finding themselves in sync: "I don't pay attention to politics. From what I've heard, I would vote for George Bush." Who's she been talking to?

• Boy Clinton reveled in the mischief that the midget Perot was causing Bush. "So now we've got this bizarre situation where Bush and Perot have accused each other of investigating each other's children," he chortled, forgetting at his peril the investigations that the tabloids have been making of *his* alleged children. Then there was the matter of all the "lip service" Clinton has been paying to women, as Mrs. Quayle put it, an ugly charge as divisive and negative as the news on October 27 that the GNP had grown by 2.7 percent in the third quarter of 1992. Fearful that victory suddenly may not be theirs, the Clintonistas rushed to complete plans for their first term. They found a new name thrown into the hat, that of George J. Goldsborough, Jr., 67, Clinton's first attorney general if not nominee to the Supreme Court. On October 8, Mr. Goldsborough, an attorney with offices in Easton, Maryland, was found guilty of kissing one client, spanking another, repeatedly spanking his secretary, and then lying about all these activities under oath. The new chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts will likely be Mr. John Marshall, the Los Angeles–based artist whose 7' x 15' *Monument of the Unknown Government Employee* was to be unveiled in November. If the reason for this government employee's obscurity is that he was on extended sick leave, Mr. Marshall could also qualify to serve as secretary of health and human services.

• The Toronto Blue Jays defeated the Atlanta Braves in six games to win the eighty-ninth World Series, an event marred by Miss Jane Fonda's presence each night in the Atlanta owner's box and by a Marine Color Guard's holding a Canadian flag hung upside down during the singing of the national anthems of the U.S. and Canada before the start of game two. Outrage among normally polite Canadians was short-lived after it was explained that in America the event is known as the Fall Classic, after the time of year when it is only natural to see a

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maple leaf pointing downward. Other spats were settled less amicably. Two drunken men tossed a grenade outside the McDonald's in Moscow, Russia, wounding five customers, and Madonna had a run-in of sorts while going through customs at JFK Airport after a European trip. The misunderstanding arose when Miss Madonna said she had nothing to declare, and the customs man couldn't believe she wouldn't help him conduct a strip search. In Greenwood, Indiana, a recent high school graduate found herself embroiled in controversy after 500 Greenwood High yearbooks were recalled in which she had allegedly defaced the photographs of some of her comely rivals, blacking the teeth of one, penciling in underarm hair on another, scribbling an obscenity under a third. "It all has to do with boyfriends," one of the victims explained. Promised Greenwood schools superintendent Robert K. Brenton: "I say very candidly that we are going to re-evaluate the full process of how we edit these books." How much kinder the atmosphere is in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, where Miss April Schuldt, 17 and five months pregnant, was elected homecoming queen by the students of Eau Claire Memorial High School—much to the principal's displeasure, it should be noted.

• The culture wars continue overseas as well. In London, where not that many generations ago even a besotted wastrel like Alfred Doolittle honored the propriety of getting to church on time, the Rev. Donald Pateman, 77, vicar of St. Mark's Church, Dalston, has had it with brides thinking it their prerogative to arrive late for their wedding. Henceforth, if the bride is 10 minutes late, he will cut one of three hymns from the service; if 20 minutes, two hymns; if 25 minutes, all three (and he sends the choir home); after half an hour he will cancel the wedding. "The ones who arrive late never apologize," the Rev. Pateman laments. "It's so discourteous." Unlike fickle English girls, the former French actress Mlle. Bridget Bardot is always in a hurry to marry. The lucky man this time around was M. Bernard d'Ormale, whom she wed at an undisclosed Norwegian location in August, according to an aide speaking on the record to reporters on October 15. The couple, he said, had met last June and "fallen in love immediately." M. d'Ormale is himself an aide to the ghastly Jean-Marie le Pen. In Moscow, foundation president Mikhail Gorbachev was granted permission to travel to Berlin for the funeral of the former West German chancellor, Willy Brandt, and civility just may be taking root in America, too. In Los Angeles, California, an L.A. County parking control officer ticketed a Cadillac parked illegally on Piru Street in the South-Central part of the city, but refrained from having the car towed away, out of respect for the driver, who sat behind the wheel, deceased. And after the untimely death of Professor Allan Bloom on October 7, the *New York Times* saw fit to remind the world of the generous words that its reviewer David Rieff had bestowed upon Bloom's 1987 bestseller, *The Closing of the American Mind.* It was a book, Rieff said, "decent people would be ashamed of having written." Now there's the sort of sentiment destined to receive wider currency as we move toward the Clinton-Gore millennium. —*WP*

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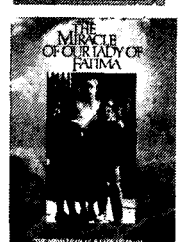

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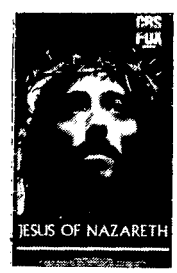

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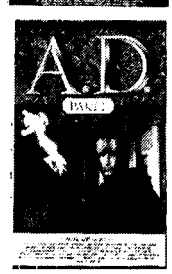

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Repent

I immensely enjoyed Mary Eberstadt's cover article on Susan Faludi ("Wake Up, Little Susie," *TAS*, October 1992). Speaking as a politically incorrect working wife and mother (and proud of it), I'm sick to death of these whimpering, spoiled brats like Ms. Faludi. Believe me, I know one when I hear one because I used to *be* one back in my uneducated, uninspired, incredibly selfish youth.

Faludi and her contemporaries' vituperative ravings spew forth from pathetic, jealous, lonely individuals who have no concept of loving another human being more than they love themselves. Were I not so sick and disgusted by this country's outrageous liberalitis infecting all "gimme" groups from evil racists, the media, and morally bankrupt politicians to baby-aborting murderers, I could *almost* feel pity for these ugly creatures.

—Jo Bunney
Spokane, Washington

Right On

I enjoyed Edward Norden's article ("South-Central Korea: Post-Riot L.A.," *TAS*, September 1992). It described the aftermath of the L.A. riots, with regard to the Korean community, well.

As described in the article, many Koreans were traumatized by the riots. They felt betrayed because they were not adequately protected. Some of them blamed themselves and society for the riots.

Koreans should not let their self-pity cloud their judgment. They should not degrade themselves and join numerous groups in America that are busy proving how victimized they are by so-called racist American society. Koreans can be successful in America without joining those who only blame the society and demand ever more special treatment from government. They should avoid the us vs. them mentality, which is embraced by some Asian-American students at U.C. Berkeley, where all whites are seen as enemies and all non-whites as allies. Koreans should ignore people like an Asian-American columnist for the U.C. Berkeley student newspaper who suggest that they should unite with other non-whites in a so-called struggle against whites. Such a mentality would only worsen racial tensions.

Koreans should not blame themselves or whites, living in neighborhoods unaffected by riots, for the L.A. riots. They should instead blame the rioters, unlike most of the media who mostly preach for so-called understanding of the rioters' "rage." Rioters should be castigated for losing their self-control and disrespecting human life and private properties.

—Kang Hee Seo
Berkeley, California

Right Thinking

Most of Tom Bethell's observations ("Better Dukakis," *TAS*, October 1992) about George Bush are accurate and well stated. But he ends in misperception. He has the right diagnosis but an awful cure.

Without actually saying how he thinks the vote should go in November, he seems to be suggesting that a Clinton presidency would be the best bet for generating a definitive conservative triumph in 1996.

That notion of a silver lining is often bandied about, but amounts only to wishful thinking.

George Bush is only the symptom of our national political disease, not the malady itself. The basic disease is what Mr. Tyrrell has aptly identified as *Kultursmog*. And while *Kultursmog* is a real problem now, under a Clinton presidency it will speed through our national veins like a galloping poison, beyond the reasonable expectation of treatment.

By 1996 any conservative effort to regain a measure of influence on political, social, and economic events will realistically be out of reach. *—Stan Langland*
Belmont, California

In Your Infinite Wisdom

A more unwelcome fate is hard to imagine. Have I been exposed as a former agent of the Stasi? Called to public court as a character witness for Ted Kennedy? Consigned to O'Rourke's Enemies List? No, my infinitely worse calamity was to be counted among the Assorted Jackasses contributing to October's Current Wisdom. This is no place for one whose political leanings have been described as substantially to the right of Attila the Hun. Allow me to defend myself.

The current campaign to distribute condoms in the public schools has nothing to do with AIDS prevention, and everything to do with population control and the promotion of promiscuity. Accordingly, I have tried to discredit this pretext by publicizing the fact that latex rubber is filled with micron-sized voids and is thus a dubious means to prevent HIV transmission. My true feelings on the subject were made evident in an earlier letter published in the *Washington Times*. However, getting a letter critical of condoms published in the *Washington Post* was problematical. (Has that left-wing rag even yet informed its readers of the Bulgarian connection to the papal assassination attempt?) My letter to the *Post* attempted to undermine the pro-condom credo by dryly reciting the facts (can't appear to be trying to impose one's politically incorrect morality on others, you know). At the letter's end, I could not resist poking fun at the veneration of condoms by advising that "when recourse is made to condoms for the prevention of HIV infection, at least two should be worn during sexual activity." Surely not even liberals could be witless enough to take this statement seriously! Alas, my humor was too subtle for the editors of *The American Spectator*, who unwittingly ensconced me in its jackass hall of shame. *—C. M. Roland, Editor*
Rubber Chemistry and Technology
Washington, D.C.

Weld in '96

As one of a growing number of openly gay conservatives, I read *The American Spectator* and I am thrilled by the clear-headed analysis (yes, of course, they got that right—about the devastation wrought by liberal economic engineering, the social distortions bequeathed by affirmative action, etc.) and appalled by the gratuitous nastiness toward homosexuals.

Don't misunderstand me, I am as incensed by lame-brain political correctness as any other conservative, and believe with every libertarian-conservative impulse that individuals must be free to think and advocate whatever they so choose. But if, as in the October issue's Continuing Crisis, you refer to "the American poofter" (I

(continued on page 73)

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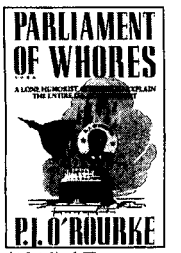

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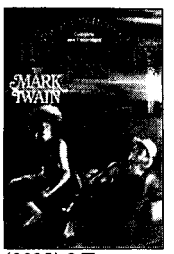

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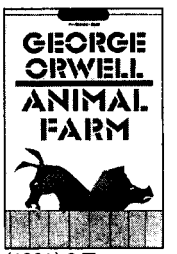

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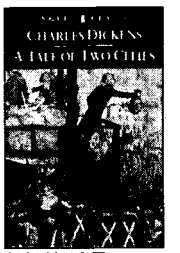

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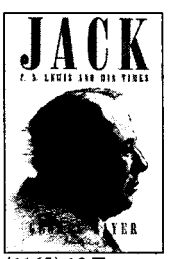

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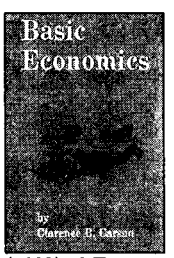

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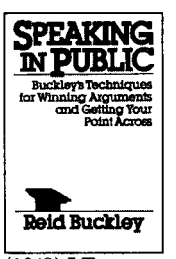

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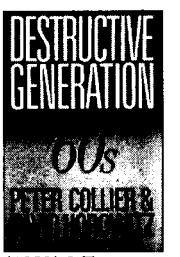

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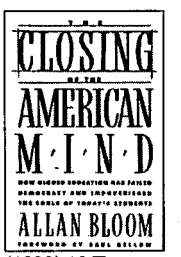

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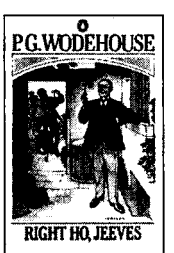

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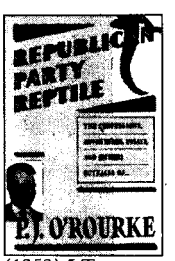

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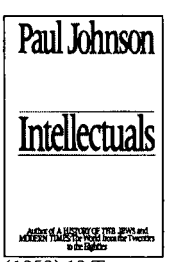

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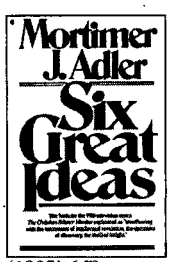

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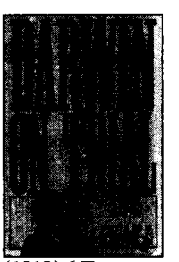

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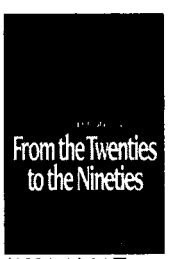

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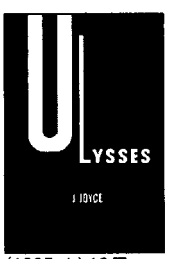

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The Lost Gentleman

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

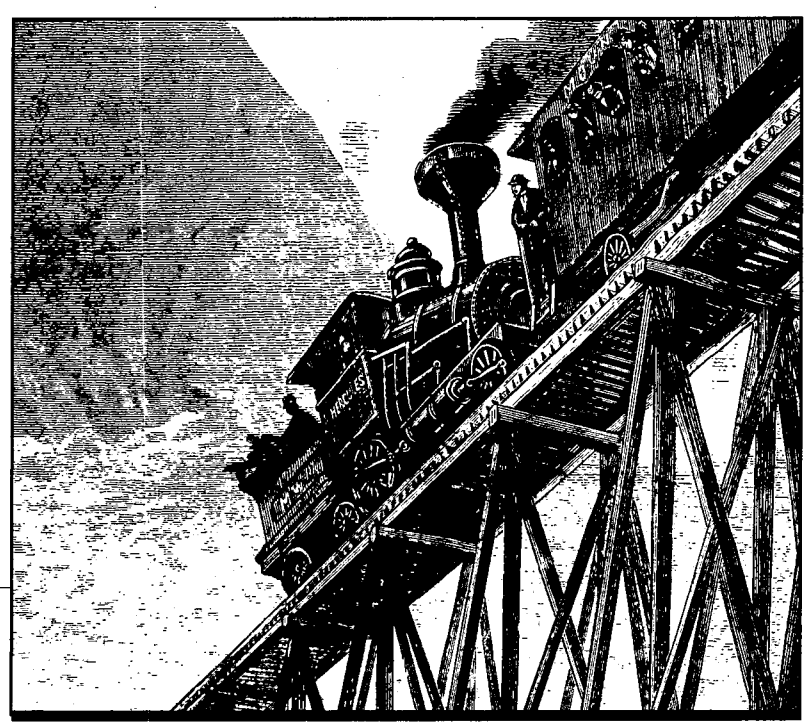
George Bush is, according to those who know him, one of the finest gentlemen to inhabit Washington in many years. Certainly he is one of the finest gentlemen I have known. Thus it is a paradox that this very kindly and amiable man is steadily going down to defeat because of the determined antipathy of nearly 60 percent of the electorate. He is one of the most unloved nice men in American history.

In the last grisly days of this election some of George Bush's friends are wondering how to explain what seems to be a public apodiabolosis. Millions of conservatives dislike the Presi-dent—though Liberals snort that he advanced conservatives in the judiciary, advanced their social policy, resorted to their favorite poisoned shibboleths, and, as William Safire lays down in the *New York Times Magazine*, sought "solid support from the far fight." Millions of Liberals are even more indignant against him—though the conservatives swear that he is a "moderate Republican," surreptitiously tacking towards the Liberal hot air. He began his presidency proffering a "kinder gentler" politics to all sides, and today he is being pummeled from all sides—occasionally with astounding venom.

One and a half years ago, despite a slowing economy, George Bush's approval rating was 88 percent, well above that of any other President since the victorious culmination of World War II. Now it has plummeted below the ratings Jimmy Carter suffered in his death throes, though Jimmy's presidency was a foreign policy disaster, and Jimmy's economy—with double digit interest rates, double digit inflation, almost nonexistent productivity gains, high unemployment and a Misery Index (combining unemployment and inflation rates) of 19.6 percent—was, well, Third World. So popular was George Bush not long ago that the Democrats' leading messiahs decided to sit out Campaign '92, thus producing this century's most mediocre presidential field. Nearly half the Democratic candidates were retired politicians!

Now George Bush is facing defeat against a mediocrity whom roughly half the electorate adjudge destitute of character or integrity—72 percent of the electorate approve Bush's character, but only some 30 percent would vote for him over the vastly less admired Boy Clinton. How did George Bush get into such a mess? Was he too nice?

In a way he was. He was too much the Yale gentleman. His closest associates were other gentlemen, such as the failed secretary of the treasury, Nicholas Brady and the far less admirable director of the Office of Management and Budget, Richard Darman. But George Bush's predicament has come about not simply because he is polite and high-minded (the Machiavel Darman certainly suffers neither of these disabilities). The President's deeper problem is that he cannot conceive how polluted the airs of



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Washington are by his enemies' politics, prejudices, and ludicrous ideas.

For that matter, most of American media and most of the public discourse are polluted with these toxins. The pollution is so pervasive that it constitutes what might be called *Kultursmog*, and George Bush was too gentlemanly to notice or to object. Thus, despite working for eight years alongside the most successful President since FDR and despite the evidence of economic boom and Communist implosion all around him, George Bush was sozzled by the *Kultursmog*'s ignorant insistence that the Reagan Administration was a failure. He broke his Reaganite pledge against higher taxes, allowing spending to go through the ceiling, the deficit to grow, and economic stagnation to set in. He spoke of being the Environmental President and the Education President and found himself overwhelmed by the regulatory and spending imperatives of the *Kultursmog*. He who should have consolidated the Reagan Revolution allowed it to be discredited. It has thus been of no use to him in either his administration or his presidential campaign.

Today, with very little ammunition, he struggles against one of the most unlikely candidates in American history, Boy Clinton. Yet from the ruins of this campaign a renewed conservatism is taking shape. Retiring congressman Vin Weber, HUD Secretary Jack Kemp, and the Vice President's chief of staff William Kristol are laying plans to consolidate the best ideas and policies of the 1970s' conservative revival. They intend to create a network stitching together the most effective organizations of the Reagan era into what will amount to a Conservative counterculture in opposition to the *Kultursmog*. Whoever wins in November, these will be the voices of the future, for in George Bush and Bill Clinton there are only the fatuities of the past. ❐

Pietistic Gore

Gore Vidal—novelist, dramatist, essayist, and vicarious pol—is making a desperate attempt to save his market share. For years his club sandwiches have sold well in the suburbs and in recently gentrified neighborhoods. But age has encroached with unexpected swiftness. Between the damp slices of white bread he would dearly love to sell a bit more ham, mayo, and sci-fi grotesque; but the truth is that his legendary confidence is gone. Acquaintances from the European scene, where he plays the role of Yank expatriate, report a development that Vidal dares not reveal to the clients back home. In the last year of the Reagan Administration, Vidal became a Christian.

Lest the large audience of wisenheimers who bought his earlier works catch on, this fall Vidal is marketing not one but two products. The first reveals his moribundity. The second—though quite unintentionally, I am sure—reveals his absorption with the Christian religion and his longing for the supernatural.

In the first book, *Screening History*, Vidal repeatedly wanders from his ostensible theme, the movies, into reveries of his youth. For a man who is only 66, Vidal's tone is charnel and curiously fated. "I now move," he writes, "graciously, I hope, toward the door marked Exit." His second book, *Live From Golgotha*, is not so straightforward. It is a rather ham- fisted attempt to maintain Vidal's old image as godless cynic, hedonist, and sophisticate. Supposedly a satire of the Crucifixion, the book lends evidence to what Vidal's European acquaintances have been saying about him.

In a word he is haunted, by the Scriptures, the hereafter, and what he sees as the coming millennium. The precursors to all this were there in his fiction years ago. Vidal has always been far gone on visions of nuclear holocaust, planetary catastrophe, political conspiracies, and flights into the irrational. His tales of debauchery and the meaninglessness of life blubbered out in fantasies such as *Myra Breckinridge* always bring to mind C. S. Lewis's lines to the effect that those who believe in nothing will believe in anything and those who long for sin yearn for salvation.

Another failed sinner and lapsed roué whose long literary life as a satirist and farceur led him to despair and Christian bliss was the English writer Malcolm Muggeridge. I knew Malcolm in his last years, when he often repeated his judgment that the next rueful dissipater to join him in scudding along the path once taken so famously by St. Augustine would be Gore Vidal. Apparently Muggeridge was right. *Live From Golgotha* reveals Vidal to be consumed with obscure details from the New Testament and questions of Christian theology. Christianity's celebrities appear, such as Jesus and St. Paul, along with the not-so-celebrated, for instance, St. Timothy. But, as has been said of Vidal before, particularly in reference to his taste in fiction, he is occasionally very old-fashioned. Though the Jewish religion and people are held in high esteem by fundamentalist Christians today, in Vidal's Christianity there are traces of the old rap against the Jews for the Crucifixion.

As with another famed nonbeliever, the pre-war writer H. L. Mencken, Vidal has long exhibited an interest in all religions, and both men have had acquaintances among the clergy. But Vidal's friendships have been more intense. An American priest who has spent much time with Vidal in Rome has told me that their conversations throughout the 1980s became more concerned with heaven and h ell and with prayer. It is rumored that Vidal has been generous to Catholic charities; and once, at a fashionable house party outside London, Vidal approached an internationally known playboy about to enter the hoosegow on a drug charge and quietly counseled "pray the rosary."

How far Vidal's conversion will take him is anyone's guess. Muggeridge became a zealous proselytizer and an eloquent opponent of abortion and birth control. Vidal's quiet support of charities suggests that he may be content with a less conspicuous role as in his last years he contemplates The End. ❐

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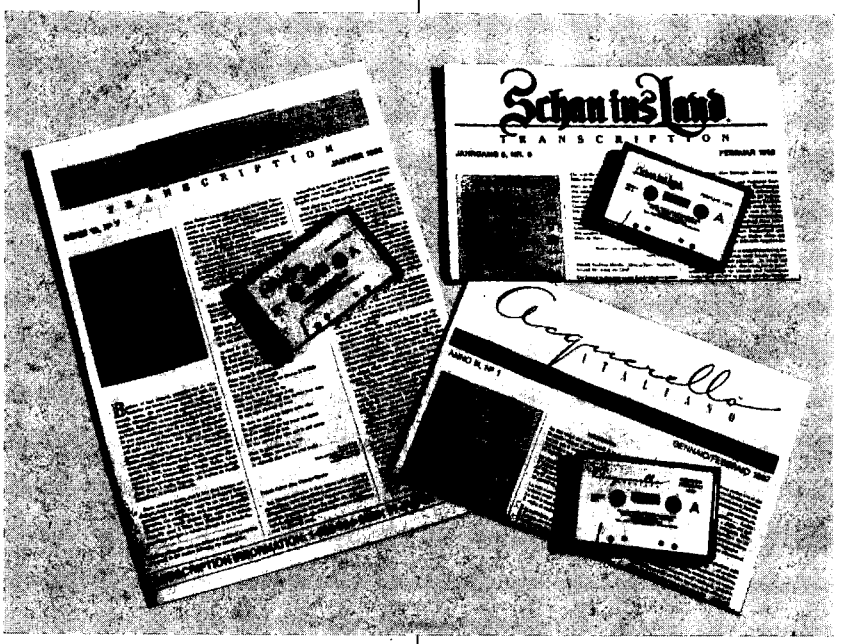

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A Major Ultimatum

by Tom Bethell

The changes in England, since I left in 1962, have probably been as great as the changes here. Recently, I spent a few days in England and made a few notes on what has happened. For one, market forces have gradually expanded over the past generation. Britain more and more resembles an American colony. They even have (American) football on TV—Brits amaze me by seeming to understand the game. They have McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Motorways take you so quickly across the country (England is smaller than Alabama) that if you miss your exit you are liable to find yourself in Wales.

There must be ten cars on the road for every one in 1962. Gasoline costs, oh, $3.50 a gallon. It's not so easy to work out the price because they have changed the units of measure and money since I left. (Surprisingly, miles have not yet been converted to kilometers, but no doubt this change will soon be imposed on the great unwashed.) Pound notes disappeared overnight a few years ago, without reference to the popular will, and were replaced by metal slugs apparently designed for slot machines. Shopping centers outside town limits are coming next. I saw half a dozen under construction, near places like Chippenham and Trowbridge. With their more convenient parking, they will attract business away from existing shops and perhaps ruin the inner core of the old towns.

Paradoxically, the power and reach of the state has also greatly increased. The welfare state is far more extensive than it used to be—with its infinitely dreary leisure centers and housing complexes for the aged, its income support and social security and supplementary benefits: a vast machine of income redistribution is now firmly in place. I read shortly before I left that they now have means-tested fines in England, showing the extent to which socialist ideas have continued to creep forward, unannounced and mostly unwanted.

In the past generation there has been a price inflation without precedent in British history. Nominal prices are twenty times higher than they were when I was growing up. Someone earning £2,000 a year in the 1950s would have to earn £40,000 to achieve a comparable standard now—perhaps more. This inflation has accommodated the massive expansion of government and has helped repudiate its debts at the expense of old-fashioned people who grew up believing that saving money was prudent and virtuous.

The most elusive change is in the composition of the ruling class. Formerly it comprised a landed gentry who were not so much hostile to capitalism as uncomprehending of it (Harold Macmillan comes to mind). These were people who genuinely believed that the most important things, like country estates, should not be for sale at all. The entertaining parody of Dennis Thatcher, which appeared for years in *Private Eye*, worked so well because it successfully captured the attitudes of a declining ruling class. Simultaneously, the old socialism, the true Bloomsbury faith, embracing the state ownership of the means of production, is also on the way out.

The new ruling class increasingly believes that the production of goods and services is best left to businessmen (carefully regulated, of course). They should be permitted and indeed encouraged to produce the goods, but they should also accept that half the gains of trade shall be skimmed off into the public coffers and put at the disposal of the nation's new ruling class. This is made up of people who work (for the most part) in the public sector, routinely fly to Brussels for meetings, send their children to boarding schools, and look forward to the opening of the Channel tunnel next year because it will speed their journey to their second homes in the French countryside.

The prime minister, John Major, is very much their man. Charles Moore, the new editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, recently observed that, far from being a Thatcherite, Major has turned out to be the spokesman of an "international salariat of professional politicians and civil servants and bankers who are bored with parliamentary democracy and want to construct a form of government impervious to the wishes of the people."

This is where the European Community comes in. The big news while I was in England was the Conservative Party conference in Brighton. It was the liveliest in memory, the burning issue being the impending ratification of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union. British subjects (the perfect word) are only just beginning to find out how important this is to their lives. Union has been advanced by stealth, using code words and obscure terminology, precisely because those who engineered it, primarily the French socialist Jacques Delors, know that its goal is something far more ambitious than a mere free trade zone—the label under which it was originally promoted.

European union turns out to be a collaboration of elites whose real goal is the creation of a new layer of transnational government based in Brussels—a government largely unencumbered by democracy. Woodrow Wyatt wrote in the *Times* that Delors and his collaborators are driven "by a desire to rule, unelected and unquestioned, the largest number of subjects they can corral together." In general, European union is the most ambitious example of

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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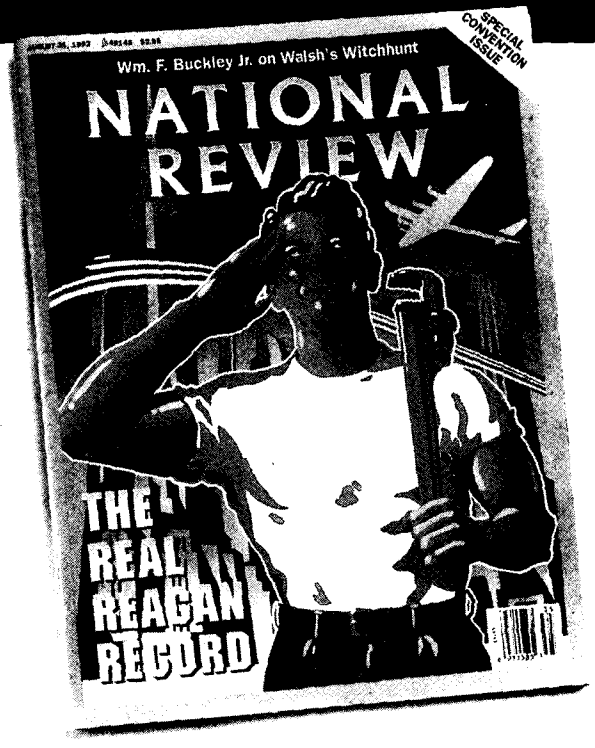

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central planning in the continent's history, and like all central planning it is likely to end in disaster.

The first step was something called the exchange-rate mechanism, which was intended to lead to currency union later this decade. It has already come unstuck. Fixed exchange rates proved unworkable because the various member governments have retained their currencies and all pursue separate policies of taxation, spending, monetary creation, and so on. The Italian government pays its subjects with money lifted more or less straight from the printing presses; the French have a hefty wealth tax; the British rulers tax capital gains at a rate of 40 percent; the Germans don't tax capital gains at all. "Economies that have evolved in different ways, with different legal systems, different commercial practices, different levels of debt, cannot be forced into the same mold without breaking a lot of bones," Ambrose Evans-Pritchard wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*. These separate policies mean that some currencies—the Deutschmark in particular—are more attractive to investors than others.

Nonetheless, all these currencies were supposed to run around the economic track maintaining the same distance from one another. It turned out that most could not keep pace with the Deutschmark. But the attempt to do so imposed a severe strain on a number of European economies, deflating them with high interest rates. As a result, Britain has experienced the worst recession since the 1930s, housing prices fell three percent in September alone, and John Major has become very unpopular. In mid-September the British, Italians, and Spanish stopped trying to keep up with the mark and allowed their exchange rates to fall.

It was at this point that the Tories met in Brighton. They were treated to a fierce denunciation of Maastricht by Norman Tebbitt, a former Thatcher minister. But as later speeches by Major and others made clear, the Conservatives are determined to ram the treaty through Parliament, even though two-thirds of the electorate now oppose the treaty. In Major's own district, only three out of ten support it. Major planned to get the treaty through Parliament with overwhelming Labour support. (In late October, however, Major announced that he would resign and call a new election if the treaty is rejected. This has given Labour political grounds to oppose the treaty. All bets are now off.)

Labour's real goal, however, is to restore the "social charter"—an ill-defined mass of labor and employment regulations from which Britain has (on paper) exempted itself. The left's support for the treaty in more extreme form shows the extent to which it is really a socialist measure. And Major's original intention to collaborate with Labour against anti-Maastricht Conservatives in his own party reminds one of nothing so much as Bush's collaboration with Democrats against the Republican right.

According to the *Independent*, a newspaper which despite its name reliably expresses the point of view of the ruling class, the purpose of the social charter is "to prevent social dumping—the move of investment to countries with lower standards." In plainer language, the purpose is to prevent competition between the various jurisdictions of the European Community—to reduce a multiplicity of jurisdictions to one.

One might ask what is left of the treaty without monetary union (which at the moment does not appear to be in the cards). Quite a lot. According to members of the (anti-Maastricht) Bruges Group, even without monetary union the treaty would cede power to the European Commission in numerous fields, including taxation, coinage, education, immigration, judicial policy, health and consumer affairs, foreign aid, energy policy, and so on. Decision-making is stacked in favor of the commission, most of whose proposals may be agreed to by a majority vote of ministers but amended only by a unanimous vote.

While I was in England the European Commission in Brussels promulgated new outrages daily. These make a mockery of "subsidiarity," the idea that Brussels will only be empowered to do those things that cannot be done at the national level. In the space of a few days, the following Eurodirectives were reported in the *Daily Telegraph*: British sausages are said to be excessively pink in their uncooked state and so will have to be changed; Brussels announced its intention to "prosecute" the British government for permitting British farmers to shoot crows on their property (the French and Italian governments were likewise condemned); the 1.5 million canary owners in Britain will henceforth have to obtain licenses, and captive starlings and sparrows will have to be accorded the same protection as the Spix Macaw, of which there is only one left in the world.

It is a measure of John Major's abiding enthusiasm for Maastricht that he remains dedicated to the treaty despite such embarrassments, and at a time when its fate remains in doubt thanks to Denmark's narrow rejection of it last June. Notice, however, that the Eurocrats' concern about Denmark did not restrain them from issuing one more directive, this one decreeing that a popular brand of Danish apple, the Ingrid Marie, is too small by a centimeter or so to be admitted into the fabled European free trade zone. As a result of publicity, this directive was rescinded (with the finding that the Ingrid Marie was not in fact an apple at all, thereby exempting it from apple-size regulations). But it will not be surprising if the Danes reject the treaty by a wider margin if it is submitted to them again.

Meanwhile the governments of four countries—the so-called Poor Four (Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Ireland)—have been bribed to vote for everything that is cooked up in Brussels. They are the (supposed) beneficiaries of something called the Structural Fund, whose multi-billions are used in these countries to finance "projects in the fields of environmental and trans-European networks." One such project, expected to cost $2 billion, will divert the waters of the Acheloös River from the west to the east coast of Greece through a tunnel underneath a mountain range. A British equivalent, according to one critic, would be "re-routing the Thames to the Bristol Channel via a tunnel blasted under the Cotswolds." The project will destroy "a river system regarded since Homer as the origin of all rivers," not to mention "one of the Mediterranean's finest protected wetland areas and home of two endangered species." Various environmental groups in Europe are up in arms.

One wonders how much longer the Germans will go on paying for this nonsense. At least they have now discovered that Maastricht calls for the abolition of the Deutschmark, Helmut Kohl having signed on to the treaty without telling them this significant fact. In conclusion, it's high time that all these European leaders were thrown out of office, while the voters still have the chance to do so. ❐

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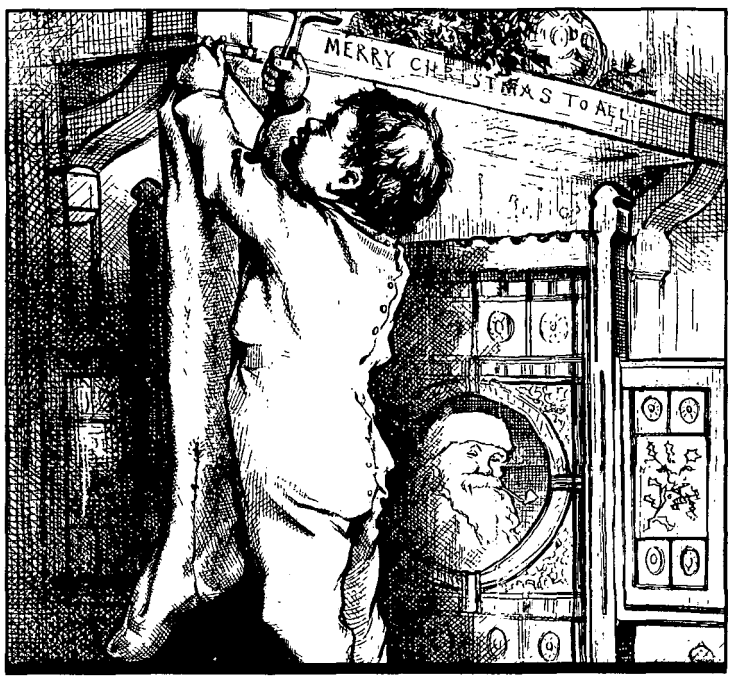
ELLIOTT ABRAMS

For the non-fiction side, the best book around is Patrick Glynn's *Opening Pandora's Box.* The subtitle tells the story: "Arms Races, Arms Control, and the History of the Cold War." It is a brilliant account of the never-ending fallacies of arms control, starting with the myths surrounding Sarajevo, and a fascinating reassessment of many "key players" (such as John Foster Dulles) of recent years. Of Robert McNamara's role with respect to Vietnam in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, and his efforts to undermine NATO strategy and promote a nuclear freeze during the Reagan Administration, Glynn has this to say: "In effect, having started a war that destroyed two presidencies, McNamara was now busily engaged in the de facto attempt to destroy a third." Now, how can you resist?



For fiction, it is time to turn back to some wonderful novels by Paul Horgan. *A Distant Trumpet* (1951) is simply the best book I've ever read about the extension of national power into the Old West, telling the story through the lives of extraordinarily vivid characters. Then his "Richard Trilogy" (1951-77), telling in three compelling novels the life story of a man born at the turn of the century, has more to teach us about New York politics, family values, and American society than ten textbooks or four thousand speeches.

For politics, Bob Tyrrell's *The Conservative Crack-Up* is more timely today than it was on its publication date. It is a pity that Daumier was not alive to do the illustrations, for his series on the Parisian courts captures many of the same characteristics Tyrrell skewers in these pages on American politics: greed, ambition, sloth, stupidity, betrayal, ignorance. But Tyrrell gives us more: a wonderful depiction of conservatism's most recent decade, and a serious discussion of where it goes next.

Elliott Abrams is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. His book on the Iran-contra prosecution, Undue Process, *was published this fall by the Free Press.*

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JAMES M. BUCHANAN

Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man.* Disregard what the professional historians say and read this book. I like large ideas and encompassing theses; Fukuyama provides these in spades. If you do not agree with his propositions, ask why.

Cole S. Brumbeck, *Congress, Human Nature, and the Federal Debt.* A post–public choice examination of the modern political psychology that produces the continuing regime of deficits.

George Steiner, *Real Presences.* This small book packs a set of provocative ideas about man, God, and personal creation. Read it once, then read it again.

James M. Buchanan, of George Mason University, was the 1986 Nobel Laureate in Economics. His most recent book, Better Than Plowing, *was published this year by the University of Chicago Press.*

EDWARD A. CAPANO

WindFall—a poignant farewell from one of nature's noblemen, William F. Buckley, Jr.

Anything by Elmore Leonard. Escapist reading by the best modern crime fiction writer in the universe.

The short stories of T. Coraghessan Boyle, a wonderfully evocative, obscure modern author.

Edward A. Capano is the publisher of National Review.

ROBERT CONQUEST

I'm in England as I write, so the first two may not be available in the U.S. Send for them:

The Anatomy of Thatcherism, by Shirley Robin Letwin. Clear and perspicacious. Treats Thatcherism convincingly as much more a moral agenda than a program or ideology. Shows how much she did to change British politics (and how much remains to be done, in part because educational and other bureaucrats failed to obey the orders of their employer, the government).

Shylock, by John Gross. A splendid contribution to Shakespeariana, and to our knowledge of how Jews and Gentiles thought about each other over the centuries. Its account of the acting history of the part alone is more than worth all the doctoral theses of the year.

Ecocide in the USSR, by Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly, Jr. No honest environmentalist could conceivably remain a socialist after reading this impeccably documented tale of horror.

Robert Conquest, the poet and historian, is a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

L. GORDON CROVITZ

Everything you may have heard about Asia during these recessionary times in the U.S. is true. Those building cranes that went AWOL from Houston and Manhattan can be found in Hong Kong and Taipei. In many countries out here, unemployment rates are around two percent and growth rates are around six percent. Not coincidentally, marginal tax rates are in the teens and bright people are too busy marketing cellular telephones to bother with law school.

The U.S. may have its problems, but William McGurn figures that Americans have a special opportunity when it comes to capitalist heaven Hong Kong. In *Perfidious Albion: The Abandonment of Hong Kong 1997*, McGurn details how Britain failed to protect its last great colony from easy Communist takeover by at least fostering some local democratic institutions that China would have to unravel. "As British influence and stature continue to wane," McGurn writes, "the U.S. remains the one country with enough at stake, and with enough leverage over both China and Britain, to create some insurance for Hong Kong." McGurn notes that there are now more Yanks than Brits in the colony—including McGurn himself, formerly with *National Review* and now a senior editor at the *Far Eastern Economic Review.*

For those who would rather transplant Hong Kong's entrepreneurial spirit back to the U.S. than have to emigrate, there is no better how-to than Robert Bartley's *The Seven Fat Years—And How to Do It Again.* Bartley, the editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, recalls the enormous economic growth between 1983 and 1990 when the U.S. never had it so good—the GNP growth of one-third and 18 million new jobs. Somehow the elite turned this into the Decade of Greed, spawning some primal need for self-abasement that turned the 1990s into the Decade of Envy, complete with the credit crunch, the criminalizing of high-yield bonds, and a suspension of disbelief about the most absurd government economic data. Bartley reminds us that economic growth is not a magic trick—and the 1980s were not voodoo.

Jesse Kornbluth's *Highly Confident: The Crime and Punishment of Michael Milken* reminds readers that the scapegoating of Milken and junk bonds was at least partly responsible for the abrupt close to the Seven Fat Years. Kornbluth, a contributing editor of *Vanity Fair*, writes that federal prosecutor Rudolph Giuliani was "more ambitious than Madonna" and "hit the ground talking." He twisted the RICO statute into a rubber hose and held Milken's brother hostage to a plea. The book title refers to the famous letters Drexel once sent to investors, saying it was highly confident that a transaction would succeed. Funds flowed to the start-up Turner Broadcastings and MCIs that created jobs in a decade when the Fortune 500 lost workers. Few are as highly confident this credit-crunched decade.

For times that try the optimism of Americans, the best antidote is a few chapters of anything written by Daniel J. Boorstin, the former Chicago professor and Librarian of

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Congress. His classic trilogy *The Americans* captured the spirit of the country better than did any of the three presidential candidates this year. His latest book, *The Creators*, is a celebration of geniuses and how their imaginations changed history. Boorstin traces the interconnections, weaving a composite that links Dante, Michelangelo, and Frank Lloyd Wright. The details are fascinating: as a sign of how times and poetry change, Boorstin notes that Walt Whitman, in his last poem, tried to "tone down his chauvinism, even admitting that America needed the world." Boorstin also recalls how D.W. Griffith's racist film, *The Birth of a Nation*, became a favorite of one V.I. Lenin. At about five interesting facts per page, this 800-page tome is terrific value.

L. Gordon Crovitz, formerly assistant editor of the editorial page of the Wall Street Journal, *is editor of the* Far Eastern Economic Review, *a Hong Kong–based weekly published by Dow Jones & Co.*

ARTURO J. CRUZ, SR.

Animal Farm, George Orwell. To understand the corruption by power of false redeemers.

The March of Folly, Barbara Tuchman. A lesson on the historical consequences of ill-fated decisions.

Imitation of Christ, Thomas a Kempis. To overcome distress.

Arturo J. Cruz, Sr. is an international development banker.

JOHN N. DOGGETT

While there are many books that I could recommend, I have selected these books because of their timeliness and relevance to some of the key policy decisions that the next President must make. All but Porter's book are suitable for reading in any environment, including the normal chaos that exists on the day after Christmas:

The Competitive Advantage of Nations, by Michael E. Porter. Professor Porter of the Harvard Business School has become *the* most influential business school professor in the world. He developed an entirely new field of study, Industry and Competitive Analysis, that has revolutionized how managers analyze, develop, and implement competitive strategies.

His latest book shares the results of a four-year-long, ten-country-wide study of why some nations have been more successful at nurturing industry-leading global competitors than others. While Porter's writing can be stiff at times, his observations and suggestions about what managers, politicians, and educators must do if they want their countries to be more competitive make his book worth the work. This book is destined to become a classic on the level of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations.*

Managing for the Future: The 1990s and Beyond, by Peter F. Drucker. Drucker is one of the most influential business thinkers and observers of this century. This book is a collection of his essays from the past six years about a wide range of subjects that are central to America's ability to be competitive in the future. Of his many books, this is the best. Drucker writes so well that reading this book is like drinking a cold drink on a hot summer day.

They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America, by Ivan Van Sertima. A few historians have suggested that Vikings, Africans, and other people came to the "New Land" centuries before Christopher Columbus was born. Some "experts" have denounced these historians as being "politically correct" propagandists. Not so for this book.

Van Sertima has uncovered a wealth of artifacts in Mexico that strongly support his claim that African explorers came to America centuries before Columbus. Van Sertima's evidence is compelling, can be verified by anyone who wants to fly down to Mexico, and upsets the apple cart for all of us who were never taught that these artifacts existed. While many prefer to reject anything that challenges what we learned in college, it is hard for readers with an open mind to discount Van Sertima's work.

The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America, by Nicholas Lemann. It is one thing to talk about "urban problems" or "race relations." It is another thing to be able to talk about these subjects intelligently. Few who claim to be experts in this area have any idea of how we came to be in the mess that we are in. Lemann does a masterful job of helping us understand how a previously ignored combination of technological and economic changes and the development of governmental policies in a factual vacuum has led to the current mess that our cities are in. This book is essential reading for anyone who wants to do something about America's "urban problems" on the basis of fact versus ideology.

John N. Doggett is the founder and president of the International Management Development Center in Austin, Texas.

MALCOLM S. FORBES, JR.

The book of the year is Bob Bartley's *The Seven Fat Years—And How To Do It Again.* It proves how real the Reagan boom was and what policies made it happen. When those principles were abandoned, we got a prolonged recession. Bartley's irrefutable evidence will eventually triumph over academic ignorance and political myopia.

Other worthy reads: William Safire's *The First Dissident*, which will do to secular-minded baby-boomers what Robertson and Buchanan could never do—enable them to re-appreciate the Bible; *Cleaning House*, by James Coyne and John Fund, and George Will's *Restoration*, which together make an overwhelming case for term limits; Garry Wills's *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, which underscores our

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appreciation of Lincoln; Bob Tyrrell's *The Conservative Crack-Up*, which enables you to understand what's happened to conservatism in the past twelve years; and Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels*, written in 1975 and still available in paperback, a superb Civil War novel.

Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr. is president & executive officer and editor-in-chief of Forbes.

PHIL GRAMM

Here are books I found to be stimulating and enjoyable, books that either provided a wealth of information or prompted me to consider a new perspective, or both:

The Road to Serfdom by Friedrich A. von Hayek, a book which opened my eyes to the importance of freedom and opportunity many years ago; *Our Country,* a history of America "from Roosevelt to Reagan" by Michael Barone; *A World Lit Only by Fire: The Medieval Mind in the Renaissance* by William Manchester; and *Eisenhower* by Stephen E. Ambrose.

Phil Gramm is a United States senator from Texas.

ORRIN G. HATCH

The Tempting of America, by Robert Bork. A tremendous book discussing the judicial and legal philosophy of one of the century's greatest legal minds. It is a readable book, and one does not have to be a lawyer to understand it.

Crime and Punishment, by Fyodor Dostoevsky.

On War, by Karl von Clausewitz. An excellent book which has long been used as a basic primer.

The Bible. Certainly no one can be intellectually and spiritually fulfilled without a thorough study of the Bible.

Orrin G. Hatch is a United States senator from Utah.

MARVIN LIEBMAN

Making History, by Eric Narcus. As good an overview of gays and lesbians in America as any, with a chapter devoted to former conservative activist and Republican congressman, Bob Bauman.

Witness, by Whittaker Chambers. The very best story of a great man's struggle with himself and with his world—specifically Alger Hiss and the historic legal battle surrounding Hiss and Chambers.

The Little Prince, by Antoine de St-Exupéry. A charming and meaningful children's book, better read by adults, which talks of life and death and the meaning of it all.

Borrowed Time, by Paul Monette. A wonderful and touching book about two men's struggle with AIDS which will provide the reader with the human side of that dread disease.

Coming Out Conservative, by Marvin Liebman. My own story of my personal struggle with homosexuality and my involvement in the anti-Communist/Conservative Movement in the 1950s and '60s.

Marvin Liebman is the author of Coming Out Conservative *and someone who has been around for a long time and seen it all—twice!*

RICHARD S. LINDZEN

Recommending a handful of books is inevitably a harder task than it seems. Somewhat arbitrarily, I'll restrict myself to nonfiction, since I hardly regard my taste in fiction to be much of an example for anyone else.

The environment has been an issue of concern in recent years. However, the literature ranges from sober science to New Age mysticism, and "balance" becomes a matter of opinion and politics. I would, therefore, urge anyone interested to spend a weekend reading several books. Three that I recommend are *Earth in the Balance* by Al Gore; *Trashing the Planet* by Dixy Lee Ray; and *Environmental Politics*, edited by Michael S. Greve and Fred L. Smith, Jr. Gore's is a well-written alarmist tract that is highly selective as to both material and interpretation. Ray brings a genuine concern for the environment to a treatise on where real threats do and don't exist. Greve and Smith repeat the old morality tale of what happens when good intentions mix with politics using some disturbing examples. Reading these three volumes won't answer all your questions, but it will leave you with the recognition that the environment is not the source of all our problems.

P. J. O'Rourke is one of the funnier commentators we have, and his civics text, *Parliament of Whores,* has the most illuminating discussion of agricultural policy I know of. James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* has been widely acclaimed as the definitive single volume history of the Civil War. I can only add that reading it was not only a

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pleasure, but left me in awe of the field of history itself. McPherson's thought-provoking discussion of the economic development of the early republic was a nice bonus. Finally, *The Flight From Truth* by Jean-François Revel offers a somewhat tedious, but nonetheless valuable, European insight into why the increased volume of information we are besieged with is not accompanied by increased emphasis on veracity.

Richard S. Lindzen is Sloan Professor of Meteorology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a member of the National Academy of Sciences, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

SETH LIPSKY

When earlier this year the *Forward*'s new Moscow correspondent, Natasha Singer, was about to depart on her assignment, she said she had room in her luggage for only ten books. She asked me to suggest the ten that I thought would be most useful to her in seeking to gain an understanding of post-Communist Russia. The list I gave her:

(1) *The Education of a Poker Player*, by Herbert O. Yardley; (2) *Poker*, by Oswald Jacoby; (3) *The Jewish War Front*, by Vladimir Jabotinsky (the Jewish nationalist who proposed in 1940 that the Jews be listed as one of the Allies in the war against Hitler and wrote of Jewish hostility to Communism); (4) *The Seven Fat Years—And How to Do It Again*, by Robert L. Bartley; (5) *Ten Days That Shook the World*, by John Reed, a feat, however flawed, of foreign corresponding; (6) *The Road to Serfdom*, by F.A. Hayek; 7) *Wealth of Nations*, by Adam Smith; (8) *The Federalist*, by John Jay et al; (9) *The Downtown Jews*, by Ronald Sanders, which I put on the list because it is largely a history of the paper for which she would be corresponding; and (10) *The Elements of Style*, by Strunk & White.

Since writing that list, I've read (and reviewed) Bob Tyrrell's *The Conservative Crack-Up*, which is on my own holiday list for friends. This season, I guess, Bob Tyrrell's and Bob Bartley's books will be the easiest to find, but those who have a way to do some Christmas shopping in used book stores may find the others. If your scouts manage to turn up an extra copy of Yardley at a reasonable price, the *Forward* would be happy to acquire the first copy we're offered so that we can put it in the Channukah pouch to Miss Singer.

Seth Lipsky is the editor of the Forward, *the successor in English to the famed Yiddish-language newspaper, the* Jewish Daily Forward.

JAY McINERNEY

For sanity's sake, and on the assumption that you have enough in the way of weighty Washington non-fiction, I will confine myself to 1992—and one early '93—fiction releases:

Clockers, by Richard Price. A nearly seamless act of fictional ventriloquism, an artful dispatch from the blasted heart of the inner city.

The Secret History, by Donna Tartt. Just because you're tired of hearing about it doesn't mean it isn't good. It is.

Et Tu, Babe, by Mark Leyner. A faux literary biography of the novelist as a steroid-enhanced, drug-fueled celebrity sex God. Fab, story of my life, babe. Except for some reason Mark Leyner calls his hero Mark Leyner. Leyner's prose is a packrat hybrid of lit-crit, techno-speak, ad copy, and pop cultural references.

White Jazz, by James Elroy. Crime fiction of the highest rank. Elroy's fictional 1958 LAPD makes Daryl Gates and Co. seem like choirboys; he's so dark and unsentimental he makes Raymond Chandler look like a . . . can I say 'pussy' in a conservative magazine? Well, you know what I mean.

Buffalo Soldiers, by Robert O'Connor. This first novel, written in the second person, is a technical tour de force, and a chilling journey into the sordid ecosystem of an American Army base in Germany.

Jay McInerney is the author of the novels Bright Lights, Big City, Ransom, Story of My Life, *and* Brightness Falls.

MARY MATALIN

Reading is my number-one therapy and salvation. A few favorites:

The Journalist and the Murderer, by Janet Malcolm. The real story of the frightening seduction process of the press and their victims. Gave me a chill.

Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All, by Allan Gurganus. Finally, fleshed out female characters portray their unique anguish and lives in a mind-numbing century for women.

Portrait of a Marriage, by Nigel Nicholson. The real-life story of an iconoclastic woman in a repressed society who stays true to herself.

Damage, by Josephine Hart. The most riveting word pictures of all time. Surrealistically tormented people who cannot resist chasing their demons.

Anything by Peggy Noonan. No modern writer knows the real American soul as well as Peggy.

Mary Matalin is the political director of Bush/Quayle '92.

MORDECAI RICHLER

For the past few months I've been doing homework rather than reading for pleasure, in preparation for my first trip to Israel since 1960. However, Paul Johnson's *A History of the Jews* turned out to be a rare pleasure. Effortlessly erudite, original, and full of surprises. I have also enjoyed *The*

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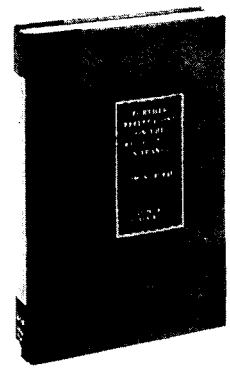

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Siege, Conor Cruise O'Brien's history of Zionism and Israel, and Norman Rose's definitive biography of the brilliant but difficult Chaim Weizmann. Early supporters of Zionism, Balfour among them, were in fact anti-Semites who wished to rid their country of Jews. Lord Cecil noted "the extraordinary impressiveness of [Weizmann's] attitude," which, he added, "made one forget his rather repellent and even sordid exterior." Nancy Astor thought Weizmann a great charmer. "He will convert you to his point of view. He is the only decent Jew I have met."

The novel I'm packing for the long flight to Israel is Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*. I thought his last novel, *In the Skin of the Lion*, was remarkable.

Penguin has recently re-issued four of Mordecai Richler's novels, among them Solomon Gursky Was Here, St. Urbain's Horseman, *and* Cocksure.

PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

The Way Things Ought to Be, by Rush Limbaugh. A breath of fresh air and deservedly a bestseller in spite of the attempt to bury it by the feminist and PC czars in the publishing and bookselling business.

Senatorial Privilege, by Leo Damore. I thought I knew all there was to know about Chappaquiddick, but this book about the Chappaquiddick cover-up is a real spellbinder.

A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy, by Thomas C. Reeves. Exposes how the American people were the victims of a massive deception about the gross difference between JFK's impressive public image and his reckless, vain, selfish, and lecherous private life.

ProfScam, by Charles J. Sykes. The first book to lift the curtain on how our universities are vast citadels of waste, ruled with an iron hand by an oligarchy of arrogant tenured professors who are overpaid and underworked.

Weak Link: The Feminization of the American Military, by Brian Mitchell. This book will help you to understand why the U.S. Navy is now in full retreat before the Pat Schroeder feminazis.

Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty: The New York Times's Man in Moscow, by S. J. Taylor. The story of one of history's greatest frauds: how a *New York Times* reporter, under the patronage of the KGB, served for twenty years as a whitewash artist who concealed and excused Stalin's mega-murders.

Phyllis Schlafly is the author and editor of thirteen books and the editor of the Phyllis Schlafly Report, *now in its twenty-fifth year of publication.*

CLINTON SMULLYAN, JR.

I do feel a responsibility for relieving the burden of reality-based cerebration imposed by *TAS*. In this election year, there is a need for fiction that does not present itself as truth. Hence, with all due lack of seriousness, 1992 fiction, or, How to Enjoy Your Christmas Vacation:

Book, by Robert Grudin. I suspect that there are those among *TAS* readers who loathe the pretensions of academia and are infuriated by the pudd'n'head argot of the Lit Crit crowd. *Book* imaginatively deconstructs the university profession in a comic rendering, using every deliciously vacuous weapon of the Lit Crits themselves. The narrative body is a murder mystery in which victims are either human or actively inanimate (footnotes, marginalia, and people are all victims of violent intervention); the heart is a pastiche of life and angst in the ivory towers. Read *Book* and lose forever your ability to discuss Lit Crit with an "expert" without howling. Guaranteed.

Sahara, by Clive Cussler. Every reading list should have one piece of junk food escape literature. Few authors would dare send a James Bond–like character into the desert to eradicate pollution and in the process have him find Abe Lincoln, Amelia Earhart, Tutankhamen's yacht, an antique automobile, a host of villains, The Girl, a lot of modern gadgetry, blood, sex, and last minute rescues, in a crockpot of fact, faux history, and science fiction. This is Cussler's forte, and is delightfully, distractingly unserious.

Murther and Walking Spirits, by Robertson Davies. Davies is, perhaps, the last great novelist who spans the twentieth century. In *Murther*, his theater critic protagonist dies in the first chapter, killed *in flagrante delicto* by his wife's paramour. In the Thereafter, a mundane movie theater, not only does the critic's life unreel before his eyes but so does the seminal history of his ancestry. Rich with Davies's empathy for Canadian history, redolent of craft, grace, fluency, a love of language, and fine story weaving, *Murther and Walking Spirits* stands out as a master's work.

Jumping Ship, by Kelvin Christopher James, is a collection of short stories linked by rhythm. James has found a voice that is hypnotic in conveying tropical settings and tropical characters. It is most affecting when set off against the different rhythms of the American mainland. The final tale, "Home Is the Heart," is a lovely, gentle, coming-of-age story; unusually, the character coming of age is a middle-aged man who has brought his son to his childhood home. The interaction between the son and his grandmother is the catalyst for the man's final reach for maturity. It is a very elegant finishing of an empathetic character. A gentle sense of the ability of the human spirit to triumph molds all these tales.

Clinton Smullyan, Jr., is a real estate developer, hence, in the current market, an expert in Fiction.

LAURENCE SNELLING

The Last Czar, by Edvard Radzinsky. Both a moving account of that turbulent epoch and a fascinating work of

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detection which illuminates the events surrounding the butchery at Ekaterinburg.

Castro's Final Hour. Andres Oppenheimer's brilliant depiction of life in *fin de règne* Cuba, much of which reads like a thriller.

Dangerous Friends, by Peter Viertel. Ostensibly about the author's friendship with those two prickly characters, Hemingway and Huston, but the author seems to have known everyone and this entertaining and evocative memoir has a marvelous supporting cast, including Orson Welles, Irwin Shaw, Dominguín, Aly Khan, and Ava Gardner.

Any novel by Carl Hiaasen. Nominally thrillers, they are in fact works of comic genius; the two best, in my view, the most recent: *Skin Tight* and *Native Tongue*.

Any of the *Flashman* novels by George MacDonald Fraser, but especially *Flashman at the Charge*, a hilariously revisionist account of the charge of the Light Brigade and other less notorious events during the Crimean War.

In a darker vein, Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle* has lost none of its force despite the passage of twenty-five years and the disappearance of the Gulag.

Laurence Snelling is a writer living in New Orleans.

THOMAS SOWELL

One of the most eye-opening books in recent years is *The United States of Ambition*, by Alan Ehrenhalt. It explores and explains the changes over time in the kinds of people who have become dominant in American politics, from the local to the national level. It is not a brief for any particular political philosophy, but its message is particularly chilling for conservatives who wonder why so many liberals get elected, even in conservative districts.

The most penetrating and lucid analysis of the homeless problem I have seen is *The Excluded Americans*, by William Tucker. Despite its somewhat mawkish title and an I-was-there preface that is eminently skippable, Tucker systematically tests the competing hypotheses as to why homelessness is suddenly a problem in urban communities across the country. He shoots down most of the explanations and excuses, and shows how big government has once again created a bigger problem than it tried to solve.

Few institutional books by or about colleges are worth the paper they are written on, but anyone who thinks that it is inherently impossible to produce anything intelligent in this genre is urged to read *In the First Place*, a collection of essays from Hillsdale College's *Imprimis* series. Any book with two essays by the late Warren Brookes is already halfway home as a top-quality publication. Add essays by Solzhenitsyn, Hayek, and the like, and you have a real gem.

Contrarians who want to know what the other half is thinking—or at least talking about—should read *Earth in the Balance* by Senator (and aspiring Vice President) Al Gore. Nothing that the Bush campaign committee could come up with on Al Gore could possibly condemn him as thoroughly as this book of Chicken Little hysteria about the environment. It may prove to be a very practical gift as well, for those who see a Clinton-Gore administration looming on the horizon, and who may wish to put their money in a Swiss bank account or apply for Australian citizenship.

Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution.

KENNETH W. STARR

This wonderful piece of advice once issued from C.S. Lewis: when inclined to pick up a newspaper, resist the temptation and turn instead to a piece of fine literature.

This year, I unfaithfully followed Lewis's admonition, but along the way I nonetheless had two memorable experiences with great, timeless literature: Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* is a rich study of the good, innocent man in a less-than-good world, and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* proved to be the reading-aloud-to-children gem of the year. For those more inclined to the here-and-now, two recent offerings loom large in my mind: Terry Eastland's superb book, *Energy in the Executive*, is a powerful reminder that conservative government must actively shape, articulate, and implement policies that embody philosophical commitments. Terry's co-author from the 1970s, Bill Bennett, has offered a hard-hitting, sobering portrait of education in America in *The De-Valuing of America*. Terry and Bill have provided both a sound theoretical framework and an effective historical example of how those in full-time public service can carry on the fight against self-satisfied immobilism on the one hand, and self-destructive arrogance on the other.

Kenneth W. Starr is the Solicitor General of the United States.

TOMMY G. THOMPSON

Do's and Taboos of Public Speaking, by Roger E. Axtell. Axtell has traveled throughout the world. This book

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describes, in a humorous way, the appropriate and inappropriate signs and body language in different countries.

A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character, by Charles Sykes. Sykes outlines the American's newfound respect for no-fault victimization, citing as examples: the New York drunk who jumped in front of a subway train and was awarded $650,000 because the train hit him; and the FBI employee fired for embezzling $2,000, who was reinstated after a court ruled that his affinity for tardiness—"chronic lateness"—is a disease.

The End of Equality, by Mickey Kaus. Kaus says that liberalism's PAWETH—point after which everything went to hell—was the 1960s, when it lined up with welfare rather than work. His book urges a new WPA to acculturate the poor to work. He says that welfare, by discouraging the mobility that allows progress through the job market, keeps most of the poor stranded in inner cities.

Tommy G. Thompson is the governor of Wisconsin.

BEN WATTENBERG

I thought I had finished with Erasmus and Luther a long time ago, in college, when students were still commanded to learn about Dweems, but were bored by it, and barely did. William Manchester's slim new work, *A World Lit Only by Fire*, makes the Middle Ages read like a novel. And those folks, when they disagreed, used to kill each other up good, in unique ways, like drawing and quartering, and boiling in oil.

We do our disagreeing differently today, more subtly, with substantially less bodily harm, as Elliott Abrams records in *Undue Process: A Story of How Political Differences Are Turned Into Crimes*. Abrams also has the narrative gift of novelistic non-fiction; this is a surreal tale, told in machine-gun prose. It would be wrong to characterize Lawrence Walsh and his little Walshniks as latter-day Torquemadas. So I won't do that. But the operation of the Independent Prosecutor's office is disgusting.

I am now reading Joe Califano's *The Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson* and Bill Bennett's *The De-Valuing of America*, both very interesting and well-told. I am wondering if there is anything about big-government activism that inevitably yields an erosion of values. I don't think so. It didn't happen with Truman, as David McCullough's wonderful biography shows.

Ben Wattenberg is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a nationally syndicated columnist.

VIN WEBER

My recommendations for active minds include:

Modern Times by Paul Johnson, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* by Michael Novak, *Our Country* by Michael Barone, any Sherlock Holmes mystery by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and, of course, *The Liberal Crack-Up* by the editor of this esteemed journal and now R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.'s *The Conservative Crack-Up*, an even more important book in view of the future that faces us. It is a vital document.

Vin Weber is a U.S. Representative from the 2d District in Minnesota.

LAWRENCE DOUGLAS WILDER

I am very fond of Shakespeare's classics, especially *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*. I find Melville's *Moby Dick* to be probing, as it requires reading for not only rhetoric but a deeper meaning.

As one goes back to read the entire series of *The Making of the President*, by Theodore White, they are good as well as almost predictable. *The Cycles of American History* by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and *Before the Mayflower* by Larone Bennett, Jr., are books that are enjoyable and educational.

These books, particularly those relative to the American scene, not only give us an opportunity to determine the history and course of our country, but appreciate the destiny and to see some bit of it unfold.

Lawrence Douglas Wilder is the governor of Virginia.

PETE WILSON

When I was in the Senate I made a habit of giving one book in particular as a gift to many friends—Michael Shaara's Pulitzer Prize–winning novel about the battle of Gettysburg, *The Killer Angels*. It's a tour de force about thoughtful, honorable men in blue and grey meeting each other in bloody combat that set the course for our nation's history. It is a tragic, noble, and heroic story, marvelously told.

I also like Tom Clancy. *The Sum of All Fears* is a great gift. And all his books—besides being rip-roaring reads—remind us of the vital necessity of keeping America's military number one in high-tech weaponry and equipment. As we saw in the Gulf War, high tech saves lives. If we have to send young Americans to fight for our country, it's morally incumbent upon us to give them the best tools available to do their jobs.

Finally, if any readers haven't read Paul Johnson's *Modern Times* yet, now's your chance—because there is a new updated edition. Send one off to your son or daughter in college. It's the best and by far the most entertaining and readable history of our century available by a distinguished journalist and historian.

Pete Wilson is the governor of California.

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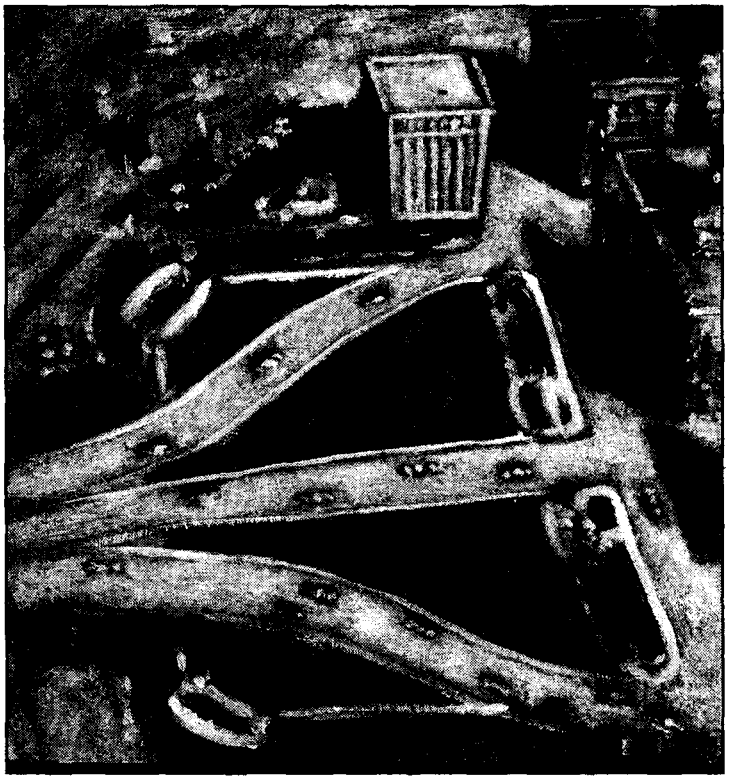
Thomas Mallon

Dallas Greets President

Time stands still in Dealey Plaza.



On Sunday morning, November 24, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald died doing what many capital criminals are unable to resist: he was returning to the scene of his crime. His journey was, of course, involuntary, but most of the millions who witnessed its fatal disruption by Jack Ruby never realized that the Dallas County jail to which Oswald was being transferred occupied the top floors of the Criminal Courts Building in Dealey Plaza and afforded a splendid view of the spot where forty-eight hours earlier he had murdered President John F. Kennedy. It would instead be Ruby who spent the last three years of his life in a cell above the Plaza.

At noontime on Friday, November 22, as he waited for the President's limousine to come down Houston Street and turn onto Elm, Oswald may have spent a moment regarding the building in which he knew he would soon be jailed and tried. He could hardly have avoided looking over to the Annex of the Dallas County Records Building either, where a number of certificates resulting from his action would soon have to be filed; and also, through the window on his left, at the Dal-Tex Building. The "Tex" was a play on "Textile" and "Texas," and inside one of the building's offices, Mr. Abraham Zapruder's camera lay waiting to do one job during the same six seconds that Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano rifle would be performing another.

The area had been devoted to criminal justice and history since the Old Dallas County Courthouse ("Old Red") came to the corner of Houston and Commerce in 1892. It was on the Kennedys' left as they drove into the Plaza, across from a bronze statue of the man for whom the square was named, George Bannerman Dealey, the philanthropic publisher of the *Dallas Morning News*. The President would have been more aware of Dealey's son, Ted, who had taken the paper to the far right and, in 1961, at a meeting of Kennedy and Texas publishers, declared: "We need a man on horseback to lead this nation, and

Thomas Mallon's collection of essays on American "spectacles," Rockets and Rodeos, *will be published in January by Ticknor & Fields.*

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many people in Texas and the Southwest think you are riding on Caroline's tricycle." Lyndon Johnson, riding two cars behind Kennedy, would have been well aware of the Plaza, because he had helped to build it. The WPA and the Texas Youth Administration, which Johnson headed in the mid-1930s, undertook the project together. As those nominating Dealey Plaza for the National Register of Historic Places described it on their application in 1991:

> This generally rectangular approximately 3-acre park was formed in 1934-40 from several blocks of Dallas founder John Neely Bryan's original land grant. The Plaza replaced residential and commercial buildings on the tract. The land was acquired by the City of Dallas during the 1930s to create a major gateway to the city from the west, and to relieve traffic congestion at the Union terminal railroad tracks which passed north-south at the western edge of the city. Originally called the "Elm-Main-Commerce Subway," the gateway was conceived as a "triple underpass" of streets, which afforded access to the western edge of downtown Dallas beneath the Union Terminal company tracks.

The same application states that the area "retains a very high level of historic integrity." In fact, the area is so nearly the same as it was thirty years ago that a first-time visitor will walk around as if in a dream. Everything familiar to him from three decades of films and photographs and re-enactments is where it should be: the pointless white pergolas still stand on the grass; the traffic flows in the same pattern; the Union Pacific trains clatter near the overpass whose shade Mrs. Kennedy said she was looking forward to as an escape from the noontime heat. The area seems to have been cordoned off, as if it were still a fresh crime scene, for more than a generation. Probably no part of downtown Dallas has changed less in that time. The only thing to jar the eye, sticking up to the southwest, about a quarter of a mile away, is the Hyatt Reunion Hotel and Tower, a great glassy complex whose construction during the 1970s, according to the NRHP Registration Form, unearthed the "remains of a woolly mammoth."

The Dallas County Administration expanded Dealey Plaza's civic functions by locating itself there in 1981 in what was once the Texas School Book Depository. The building at 411 Elm Street had been constructed for the Southern Rock Island Plow Company in 1901 and was leased to the Depository some years before the assassination. By the 1970s the TSBD (a private brokerage company, not a state agency) had left, and the building was besieged by debt, disrepair, and an arsonist. Dallas County finally acquired it, and today the structure is perhaps the most startling example of "mixed-use" architecture in urban America. As the local government goes about its business on the lower floors, a stream of tourists moves overhead, reliving the assassination in a museum run by the Dallas County Historical Foundation and called The Sixth Floor.

Oswald's sniper's nest, as well as the corner opposite, where his rifle was found, have been glassed off and replicated with Scott, Foresman textbook cartons stacked in the configuration they made in police photos on November 22, 1963. The area still looks like a warehouse—gray; bricked; beams exposed overhead—and a visitor can walk around, imagining Oswald not only at the hour of the killing but also in the weeks he went about his ordinary business. (His clipboard with three unfilled orders was not found on the floor until ten days after the assassination.)

As the local government goes about its business on the lower floors, a stream of tourists moves overhead, reliving the assassination in a museum run by the Dallas County Historical Foundation and called The Sixth Floor.

But instead of grade-school readers and math texts, the bulk of the floor is now filled with exhibits on Kennedy's presidency and death. Displays on his "Economic and Social Programs," "The Red Threat," "The Space Race," and so forth precede ones concerning the assassination itself. The ironies that began with one's entry to the building (a sign requests that weapons be checked) continue with such curiosities as the *Dallas Times Herald* editorial page from November 21 ("We believe both the world and John F. Kennedy will like what is seen here") and the most poignant one of all: the sketch done the following morning by the same paper's layout editor, in anticipation of the afternoon's press run. Three items were slated to run under a photo: SECURITY BOYS PLAY IT COOL; JACKIE SPARKLES, LADYBIRD TOO; CROWDS CHEER WILDLY FOR JFK.

Near Oswald's corner window the ABC Radio bulletin about shots being fired at the motorcade plays over and over from a tiny speaker, its words joining those coming from the videotape players near each of the main exhibits, quick loops that visitors can activate by pushing a button. The result is a strange polyphony: the "Vote for Kennedy" jingle from 1960 mixes on the air with Taps; the President jokes about being the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris as a reporter, from another speaker in the distance, shouts that "Oswald has been shot!" If you spend only ten minutes on the floor, the result is discordance; allow yourself more time and the audible blend of life and death, the swirl of history, comes to seem exactly like memory. The final effect is haunting, and you realize that what first seemed to be clumsiness is actually a brilliant curatorial stroke.

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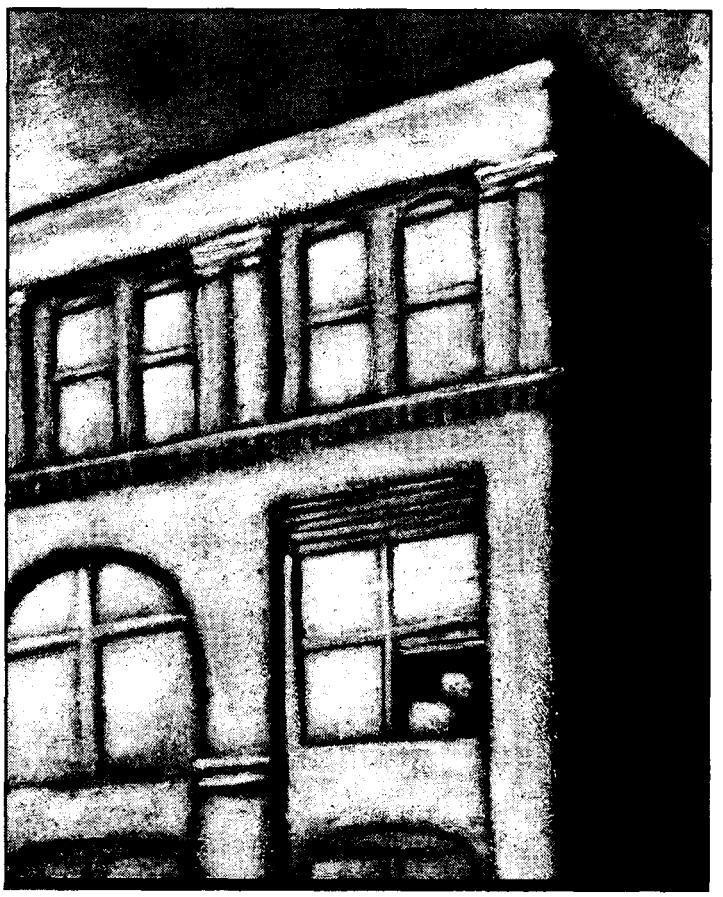
The museum's location embraces the premise that Oswald killed Kennedy, but the exhibits are hardly dogmatic. A large section is devoted to "The Investigations," and along with the Warren Commission there are displays on the Rockefeller Commission (1975), the Church Committee (1976), and the House Select Committee on Assassinations (1976-1978). An enormous photo blowup shows shelves and shelves of speculative books, and one wall lays out a series of possible conspiracies: "New Orleans Scenario," "The Far Right," "Organized Crime," etc. A board with the heading "Who Did It?" points out how the Warren Commission has never been disproved, but notes that the "questions 'why?' and 'for or with whom?' are more difficult."

This evenhandedness does not satisfy a great many of the people who pay $4.00 to come up here. Almost no one arrives without an opinion or theory, after all. One nicely dressed group of people in their thirties, who would be standing respectfully mute if they were in the Dallas Museum of Art, here earnestly discuss, as one of them vigorously taps a photograph, how Mrs. Kennedy climbed out of the car to avoid being killed. The Visitors' Books record much praise for the exhibits, but also the frequent feeling of being conned ("Nice Museum—Too Bad it can't contain all the Truth"). There are calls to "Open the Files. We know the U.S. formed the Conspiracy. Just tell the TRUTH. Oliver Stone hit it on the DOT." Expressions of faith in the Warren Report are rare, though one man who says he saw Kennedy three times—"The Last in Sept. '63 When He Rode in An Open Car in Forest Hills, Queens-N.Y. on the way to What Is Now JFK Airport"—wonders why people can't accept that a "lone nut job" did it. Some people express the belief that we'll never know the truth; others recall where they were when they heard the news; and still others, older ones, use the book to communicate with Kennedy himself: "We love you and miss you."



"This isn't a very honest exhibit," says one woman to somebody perusing the books. "What they call the fatal head shot isn't the fatal head shot." She means that they don't show frame 313 of the Zapruder film, a complaint she takes to a security guard downstairs, who explains, to her incomplete satisfaction, that that portion of the film was considered inappropriate for children. Back out on Elm Street, if she stops to look at the historical plaque on the building, she may take comfort from the last sentence, in which the word ALLEGEDLY, after the name Lee Harvey Oswald, has been rubbed to a bright silver by those who share her suspicions.

Out on Elm Street, on the "grassy knoll" beneath the Depository, visitors concern themselves not so much with the sixth floor as the sixth stripe, the white traffic line Kennedy's limousine was riding over as the fatal shot was fired. One old man who's out here nearly every day hustling for change says he saw the whole thing, that the shot came from the front: when he asks where you're from and you say New York, he exclaims fondly about how John-John now works for the D.A. up there. On a Saturday afternoon there are half a dozen men hawking *JFK Today*, a theory-filled newspaper that costs $3.00 and contains a buy-one-get-one-free coupon for frozen yogurt available in the old Dal-Tex Building. One of these salesmen is young Gordon Gray, who declares, "I personally believe Eugene Brading shot him." (Brading had Mafia ties, knew the eyebrowless David Ferrie, and was in the Dal-Tex building supposedly looking for a phone at the time of the assassination.) Gordon, who has the polite yes-sir, no-sir manners that impressed Mr. Truly enough to hire Lee Oswald at the Book Depository thirty years ago, sells about a hundred papers a day but cheerfully admits that the other fellows do much better. Along with Brading, he thinks, two other teams of assassins helped fire a total of five shots. The motorcade route was changed at the last minute for better triangulation and to keep Jackie out of harm's way. Oswald may have given a signal from the doorway of the Depository. Gordon has never been up to the Sixth Floor museum, but one of his colleagues asks if it doesn't seem "a little Warren Commission–oriented"—and isn't the curator, Ms. Conover Hunt, related to the notorious H. L. Hunt oil family?

"We're heading into nut country." What the President is supposed to have said in approaching his life's final

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destination comes to mind when you're on the third floor of the West End Marketplace, in the old warehouse district (now restored and boutiqued) a couple of blocks from the Depository. Above Musicland and Antique Angle and the Texas T-Shirt Co. sits the JFK Assassination Information Center, whose patrons include Oliver Stone, Kevin Costner, and some dissenting eyewitnesses to the crime. The decor of the exhibit areas eschews the warehouse gray of The Sixth Floor in favor of a bold red, white, and blue. Here a visitor can see frame 313 over and over, to his heart's content, on a monitor above a "Schematic Model Showing The Ridiculous 'Single Bullet Theory.'" At the souvenir stand he can purchase any number of books and videos on the assassination or just a deck of "Coup d'Etat" playing cards. "Do you have anything that has quite a few pictures of Lee Harvey in it?" asks a woman of the clerk.

The sign over the entrance promises NOT JUST QUESTIONS—ANSWERS! but a visitor soon realizes that the Center's business is not to "get to the bottom of this case once and for all" (the words in its Statement of Purpose). The real purpose is to dig the black hole ever deeper, to perpetuate the event as one would the Crucifixion (the wooden door to Jack Ruby's apartment is displayed as a relic) and to proliferate theories with the kind of "non-judgmental" collegiality one finds at a Unitarian supper. For sale: a volume by W. R. Morris and R. B. Cutler called *Alek James Hidell, alias Oswald who died in an heroic attempt to save his President's life*. For your consideration: a photo of witnesses on the grassy knoll. "DO YOU RECOGNIZE SOMEONE WHO WAS IN DEALEY PLAZA THAT DAY? THE JFK ASSASSINATION INFORMATION CENTER WOULD LIKE TO KNOW!"

Bob Kintzle, who drives and guides the bus tour that leaves each day from the Center, is a husky-voiced, friendly suburban fellow, well-informed and hospitable; he keeps a cooler full of free soda at the front of the bus and, unlike the managers of The Sixth Floor, encourages picture-taking. What he says of Oswald's second murder is in keeping with the Center's ecumenicalism: "I respect everybody's opinion on the Tippit case." Tenth and Patton Streets, the site of the officer's killing, is only one of the stops the old white schoolbus makes on its pilgrimage through Dallas. The ride begins with the last mile and a half of the motorcade route, and as the bus travels down Main a video up front plays an old David L. Wolper documentary showing President Kennedy traveling the street on the day of the murder, so you enter the Plaza more or less as he does.

Once there, Bob takes you to the grass between Elm and Main, the spot where Mary Moorman took the photo of Kennedy slumping into his wife's arms, a photo that, when enhanced, many "researchers" believe, shows a man across the way, behind the stockade fence, firing at the President. Bob confesses that looking at the picture leaves him "buggy-eyed," and that he doesn't buy everything they say about it. But, hey, "different strokes for different folks." In the parking lot (unpaved in '63) behind the fence (much of it still intact) Bob tells his audience about the suspicious things seen here by Lee Bowers, the "tower man" working the railroad switching system that morning. "They did not check trunks. You could have driven out of here at ten that night with a bazooka in your trunk." The audience listens attentively as someone not with the tour walks past on her way to take one more look at the fence—it's the woman who argued the other day with the security guard.

"Somebody want to rent a room?" jokes Bob after we've crossed the Trinity River into the rundown Oak Cliff section of Dallas. Sure enough, there are still "Bedrooms for Rent" at Oswald's old rooming house at 1026 N. Beckley.

Bob's customers one Sunday afternoon include a vacationing family ("Wait for Grandma!"); an unaccompanied man on holiday who asks in a British accent if someone will take his picture at the triple underpass; and a bearded, professorial fellow who is sufficiently knowledgeable to prompt Bob whenever he blanks out: it was Ken O'Donnell to whom JFK remarked on the ease with which someone could kill him, and Robert MacNeil who breathlessly asked Lee Harvey Oswald where he could find a phone as Oswald exited the Depository a few minutes after the assassination.

"Somebody want to rent a room?" jokes Bob after we've crossed the Trinity River into the rundown Oak Cliff section of Dallas. Sure enough, there are still "Bedrooms for Rent" at Oswald's old rooming house at 1026 N. Beckley. (Across the street from it, written in faded paint on the pavement beside a boarded-up locksmith's, is the graffito: "The one truth is that Lee Harvey answered GOD's order to blow off JFK's head. Oswald is in heaven.") It was here that, shortly after the assassination, Oswald picked up his pistol, perhaps after realizing, according to Bob, that he'd been "stood up for the prom" and that he was "it": the patsy. To Bob, who talks of helping out on "Oliver's movie," the assassin is always "Lee," his killer "Jack." The familiarity seems more natural than presumptuous. After all, Bob can answer a question about whether Oak Cliff was always this shabby by saying, "I talked to Marina about it. She says it was nothing great," though not as beaten down as it is now. He knows Jim Leavelle, one of the cops holding on to Oswald when Ruby shot him, as well as a couple of Jack's girls, who tell him they saw Lee and Jack together a number of

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times. Jack's old apartment is now a battered dump, the pool overgrown with weeds ("South Fork this place isn't," says Bob), in a neighborhood where landlords advertise "Special Rates—No Drugs."

The tour rolls on toward the abandoned Texas Theatre, where Oswald was arrested and whose marquee shows the faded outline of the sign for the movie playing there (CRY OF BATTLE) that afternoon. (The fading is not from 1963 but 1991, when Oliver Stone put the letters back on the marquee.) About a year ago Bob had a gun pulled on him when he led a tour party into the theater and inadvertently walked into the middle of a drug deal. From here it's on to 214 Neely Street, where Oswald posed in the backyard with his rifle (the famous "faked" photo). This old frame house looks barely habitable, but a skinny fellow who lives in it is out back working on his car radio. He says the tour bus doesn't bother him at all. Our last stop is the ramp down which Jack walked into the Dallas police station to shoot Lee.

As far as the Dallas police go, they've continued their tradition of hospitality toward the purveyors of live entertainment: Bob says they've been very good to him with permits since he put the tour together a year and a half ago. The Chamber of Commerce has also sent business his way. He's out here six days a week, giving good value for the $19 price, and when he drops everyone back in the West End there's a hearty round of applause for his efforts.

Where was Oswald heading when he left his rooming house? One doubt, or just peculiar thought, that Bob Kintzle puts in your head involves something observable from the tour. More or less between 1026 N. Beckley and Ruby's own Oak Cliff apartment sits the point at which Oswald killed Officer Tippit. Was Oswald on his way to see Ruby? As the notes in the Visitors' Books say: we'll probably never know. But in the researchers' world, where all coincidence is sinister, where all improbability and irony must give way to evident design, the answer to every question is a scary, whispered *yes*.

Even without prompting, one's own eyes will raise questions. Looking down from the sixth floor onto Houston Street, as the motorcade approached. Oswald had a clear shot at Kennedy, so why didn't he take it? Why did he wait for the limousine to make its 120-degree turn on to Elm Street before firing, over the trees, from behind? As Gordon Gray says, it could have been done "no muss, no fuss" while the car was still on Houston—that is, assuming there was somebody up on the Depository's sixth floor. And what about the curious path itself (what Bob calls "the little re-route job")? Who decided on that awkward turn instead of just having the motorcade continue through the Plaza via Main Street? Was it really so "impracticable" to reach the Stemmons Freeway from Main (as the Warren Report insists), or was the President sent into an ambush?

The answers to these questions are probably more simple and human than "research" will allow. Shooting Kennedy in the face would actually have involved plenty of "muss," and it's not too farfetched to suppose that Oswald, a colossally conflicted boy, looked through his telescopic sight at Kennedy, smiling broadly, and could not bring himself to pull the trigger. Not until Kennedy turned the corner and showed only the back of his head, making the deed more like an aerial bombing than a shooting. In short, what made Oswald do what he did the way he did it was probably the same thing—a burst of sentimentality—that made Jack Ruby do what he did on Sunday morning: *he* would be the man, the hero, who spared Mrs. Kennedy the ordeal of returning to Dallas for the trial of her husband's murderer. That the President was in a position to be murdered at all—slowly zig-zagging onto Houston and Elm instead of gliding down Main—probably involved another species of vanity, the political kind: Why even bother to remove the traffic barrier between Main and the Freeway if the President could receive an extra hundred smiles, wave to an extra hundred voters, by driving past the Plaza's buildings instead of between its stretches of grass? The calculation cost John Kennedy his life, but it insures that people are always still there, shyly holding their cameras, as if waiting for someone famous who'll be by any minute. ❐

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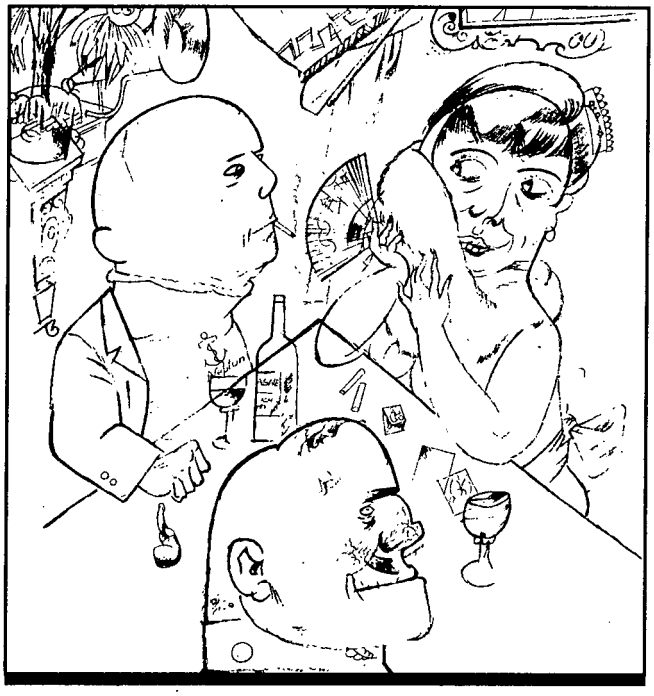
Harvey Klehr and John Haynes

The Comintern's Open Secrets

The archives of the late Communist Party of the Soviet Union reveal a clear picture of subversion in the United States.



With only a hundred thousand members at its height in 1939—and a fraction of that number for most of its history—the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) has had an impact on American life far out of proportion to its size. From the late 1940s through the 1950s the activities, real and imagined, of American Communists were one of the chief issues of American politics. The image of American Communists as subversives was one of the most powerful legacies of that era. It was not just their ideas that were anathema but the suspicion that they were agents of the Soviet Union—burrowing away in American institutions to weaken the democratic political system.

Evidence linking American Communists to espionage has never been persuasive to those who see the testimony of ex-Communists as suspect, do not trust U. S. government files, and believe that the major reason for Communist secrecy was government persecution. True, most American Communists were not spies, and many did not see any conflict between Communism and democratic values. But that is not to say that the suspicions were groundless, particularly since a new source of documentation on this issue has become available: the Soviet archives in Moscow. There were innocents who were unjustly treated, but the Soviet archives also show that some of the so-called innocents were liars.

Harry Bridges

Consider the late radical Harry Bridges, who made his West-Coast International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union a powerful force in labor relations and California politics. From 1938 to 1956, the U.S. government tried to deport the Australian-born Bridges, alleging that he was a Communist. Bridges, in four different federal hearings, denied his CPUSA membership under oath. Bridges won his court battles, and a number of historians have endorsed his veracity and denounced the government for baseless persecution.

We found in the Soviet files a list of CPUSA members elected to its Central Committee at the party's 1936 convention. Accompanying the list are brief biographies in Russian. One of the names on the Central Committee list is that of a comrade "Rossi"—identified in the accompanying biography as the pseudonym of "Bridges." The biography describes Bridges as "President of the Dockers' and Port Warehouse Workers' Union. He is a strong leader of the union movement and a mass worker but up till now has only limited party knowledge and experience."

This document corroborates evidence given against Bridges in 1938 before Harvard Law School Dean James

Harvey Klehr is Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Politics at Emory University. John Haynes is editor of the Newsletter of the Historians of American Communism. *They are co-authors of* The American Communist Movement: Storming Heaven Itself *(Twayne), and are editing a three-volume collection of documents from the Russian archives to be published by Yale University Press.*

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Landis, then serving as a special immigration examiner. John Leech, a former official in the California Communist party, testified that within the party Bridges went under the pseudonym of "Rossi." He stated that California Communists put forward Rossi/Bridges for the Central Committee, and the national CPUSA convention ratified Rossi's election at its 1936 convention. Leech, however, was a strange person, a dandy who spoke at interminable length, frequently insisting on pursuing side issues of little relevance and about which he appeared to know little. Landis, repelled by Leech's effete manner, accused him of "verbal hemophilia" and doubted his honesty. On the other hand, Landis found Bridges's straight-forward denials impressive and convincing. But Leech, weird though he was, was telling the truth.

Whatever the morality or wisdom of the government effort to deport him, Harry Bridges was not only a member of the Communist party but a member of its ruling Central Committee. He deceived and committed perjury before Dean Landis in 1938, lied to and perjured himself before an immigration examiner in 1941, deceived a majority of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1945, committed perjury at his naturalization hearing in 1945, and lied once again at his 1949 trial for perjury. He deceived quite a few historians as well. In 1992, the University of Washington even established the Harry Bridges Endowed Chair in Labor Studies.

Whatever the morality or wisdom of the government effort to deport him, Harry Bridges was not only a member of the American Communist party but a member of its ruling Central Committee.

The Bridges case is only a sample—and more sensational than most—of what these newly released documents provide: a description of the long-hidden world of American Communism. Although the new Russian intelligence and military intelligence agencies have limited access to the archives of the KGB and the GRU, the files of the officially disbanded Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) are available for perusal. Indeed, the Yeltsin government regards these files as invaluable in its campaign to complete the destruction of Soviet Communism. Included in the old CPSU Central Party Archives (now called the Russian Center for the Storage and Study of Documents of Recent History) are the records of the Communist International, or Comintern, which until 1943 promoted Soviet Communism abroad. The Comintern's records contain a significant amount of KGB material.

It will take years for scholars to assimilate and evaluate the evidence, but our research already gives us a number of leads on suspects—from Bridges to Alger Hiss—whose Communist party affiliations will soon be confirmed or disproved.

Eugene Dennis and Wild Bill Donovan

Of course, much of the suspicion surrounding American Communists stemmed from charges about the party's close ties to Soviet intelligence. A dramatic example of these links—and how they involved American intelligence during World War II—comes in a coded May 1942 memo from the Comintern archives. In it, General Pavel Fitin, head of the Foreign Intelligence Directorate of the NKVD (the KGB of that era), told Georgi Dimitroff, head of the Communist International, that one of his NKVD officers in the U.S. had met with "Comrade Ryan." Ryan was the pseudonym for Eugene Dennis, then a member of the CPUSA's Political Bureau and from 1946 to 1959 General Secretary of the CPUSA.

"Eugene Dennis" was itself a pseudonym. Under his real name, Francis Waldron, he had fled to Moscow in 1930 after his work for the CPUSA's Trade Union Unity League led to a California indictment for criminal syndicalism. Using the name Tim Ryan, he served as a Comintern agent in the Philippines, South Africa, and Shanghai before returning to the United States as Eugene Dennis in 1935. After a stint in Moscow in 1937 as the CPUSA's representative to the Comintern, he came back to America in 1938 to join the party's national leadership. The CPUSA sent him underground from 1940 to mid-1941 for safekeeping, in case the party were outlawed for supporting the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

Dennis, in short, had extensive experience in clandestine work. His meeting with the NKVD officer dealt with the activities of Milton Wolff, the last commander of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, the Communist-led American contingent that had fought in the Spanish Civil War with the International Brigades. Fitin describes Wolff as "U.S. Communist party member Wolff."

Dennis reported that in November 1941, Wolff had met with Colonel (later General) William Donovan, recently appointed head of the Office of the Coordinator of Information by President Roosevelt. Donovan's agency, soon to become the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), was the chief intelligence arm of the U.S. during World War II and predecessor to the CIA. Dennis explained that the meeting had been arranged by Diana Sheehan, the wife of journalist Vincent Sheehan. Wolff in 1992 confirmed this meeting and Diana Sheehan's role.

Ostensibly, Donovan wanted to discuss Wolff's interest in the release of the high-ranking Italian Communist and International Brigade officer, Luigi Gallo, from a French internment camp. In fact, as Dennis reported, Donovan asked Wolff to recruit International Brigade veterans for the British, who would use them for "diversionary work in the rear of Axis countries." (Donovan's acting as a recruiter for British commandos is another illustration of the extent of FDR's policy of all-out aid to Britain even before U.S. entry into the war.)

Dennis said that Wolff took this proposal to the CPUSA and received its approval. Wolff established an office in New York, and

> earns 60 dollars per week and gets additional funds from intelligence. . . . Wolff has given the English 12 Yugoslavs, 3

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> Czechs and 1 Italian. . . . Recently Wolff gave over to American intelligence 10 Americans, 1 Greek and 3 Yugoslavs, all of whom are undergoing training in special groups ("commandos"). In addition to the requisitioned party members whom Wolff gave to American intelligence, there were also 6 nonparty Hungarians and 4 Czechs.

Wolff in 1992 denied formal membership in the CPUSA but otherwise confirmed the major points of the memo.

Fitin's report also said that in December 1941 Dennis himself was assigned to negotiate between the CPUSA and U.S. intelligence on such matters as anti-Fascist radio propaganda. Further, Dennis reported that Donovan had asked him "to give him [Communist] party organization contacts in France" but he had claimed to possess no such contacts. Dennis also described Donovan's contacts with exiled Italian Communists and relayed queries from Spanish Communist party leaders exiled in Cuba about what they should do in response to requests from American intelligence for recruits and information.

Communist involvement with the OSS was initiated by the OSS. Not only did Donovan approach Wolff to recruit Communists for commando missions, but he was in contact with Dennis specifically because of Dennis's role as the CPUSA liaison with American intelligence.

Dennis, clearly uneasy, told the NKVD that he wanted "instruction on these issues as soon as possible to the leadership of the American, Spanish, Italian and Canadian Communist Parties." Fitin told Dimitroff that from the NKVD perspective, "this entire affair is a political mistake on the part of the leadership of the U.S. Communist party. Thanks to it, English and American Intelligence were able to penetrate" several Communist organizations.

That Dimitroff shared Fitin's judgment is demonstrated by a handwritten notation on the document stating "an order was given in New York to stop [indecipherable] this work." In a second coded telegram, delivered in late June through NKVD channels, Dennis reported directly to Dimitroff, saying that the CPUSA leaders "fully agree with your suggestions regarding Wolff's activity; we have passed all necessary measures toward halting this activity and to prevent his influencing leftist organizations to join in with him." Moreover, Dennis noted that "we have discussed this matter with Earl." Earl Browder, head of the CPUSA, had been out of active leadership while in prison for passport fraud. On May 16, 1942, just prior to Dennis's telegram, FDR commuted Browder's sentence to time served and released him.

Wolff acknowledged in 1992 that he shut down his OSS recruiting operation in mid-1942 but was reluctant to attribute this to CPUSA orders. He said that, without Dennis's help, it was very difficult to recruit International Brigade veterans, but stressed that he had become irritated with the OSS because it was not planning to operate against Franco. He then quit the OSS and joined the U.S. Army. However, he was assigned to longshore work in an Indian port rather than combat duty because of, he felt, his Communist links. Even so, he succeeded in getting into combat by volunteering for one of General Stilwell's raids into Burma. He said that in 1943 Donovan tracked him down and offered him OSS work in Italy, which he accepted.

Although the Wolff matter had been settled, Dennis said in his June 1942 telegram that he and Browder had requested that Dimitroff instruct them on three other issues. First, the exiled Spanish Communists wanted to cooperate with Donovan because they needed American help to establish communications centers in Lisbon and Marseilles. Second, the CPUSA had given the FBI information on people suspected of pro-Nazi "Fifth-Column" activity, and American Communists wanted permission to hand over more. Finally, the CPUSA had "contact with the department of foreign propaganda and with the USA information coordinator. This is one of three departments of the so-called 'Donovan Committee'; it answers directly to the White House." (Initially, Donovan's agency included a large information and propaganda operation, most of which FDR moved to the newly created Office of War Information [OWI]. Donovan's OSS retained some propaganda operations aimed at enemy nations.) Dennis went on to report:

> Similarly, we have a few people working in the Czech and Italian radio operations divisions of this department and some who influence . . . broadcasts in German. We feel it expedient to continue this contact, and to place people in the radio broadcast division, of course, if you agree.

The messages make clear where the loyalty of American Communists lay. Dennis notes that he and Browder awaited Comintern "instruction" about whether the CPUSA should cooperate with American intelligence to mount campaigns against Nazi Germany. These two American citizens were also in agreement with the orders of the Comintern to halt Wolff's recruiting for the OSS because it might jeopardize Communist apparatuses.

The messages document another point: Communist involvement with the OSS was initiated by the OSS. Not only did Donovan approach Wolff to recruit Communists for commando missions, but he was in contact with Dennis specifically because of Dennis's role as the CPUSA liaison with American intelligence. Donovan once remarked to an aide, "I'd put Stalin on the OSS payroll if I thought it would help us defeat Hitler." (Donovan did remove a number of

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Orthodox Catholics: DON'T DESPAIR!

Anne Roche Muggeridge, daughter-in-law of convert Malcolm Muggeridge, has said in her recent book, *The Desolate City: Revolution in the Catholic Church* (Harper & Row): "Because the integrity of its message has been betrayed, the Catholic Church is in ruins. Yet even now there are converts, of exceptionally high quality, and their number is increasing with the tenure of the present Pope. Catholics watched with a mixture of pity and amusement as the excellent Anglo-Catholic *New Oxford Review* argued and agonized itself into the [Roman] Catholic Church. I know a substantial number of recent converts like this and am much edified by their purity and ardour. Seven of them are my godchildren, and I must confess that some of us, to our shame, earnestly tried to delay them, on the grounds of the growing disorder in the Catholic Church. They forced their way past us anyway, thank God. They come because at the highest level of Catholic teaching, the doctrine of the faith, though much embattled, remains uncompromised and is as fearlessly proclaimed by John Paul II as by Peter, Paul, Ignatius, or Augustine. These new Catholics and the extraordinary Pope to whom they belong are a very present comfort when one is tempted to despair."

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OSS personnel for concealing Communist membership and activity.) Donovan's attitude was sensible, but fraught with risk. While the arrangement allowed the OSS to make use of the Communists, it also allowed Communists to make use of the OSS. Understanding the tradeoffs of this arrangement has been made difficult by the denial by most of those involved that it ever existed.

During the war, secrecy was a military requirement; afterwards, however, this secrecy simply covered up what had become an embarrassment. In 1945 a congressional committee, concerned about Communists holding military commissions, asked Donovan about several OSS officers it had identified as Communists, including Milton Wolff and two other Lincoln Brigade veterans. Donovan in answering praised the OSS records of the three, saying: "These men I've been in the slit trenches with. I've been in the muck with, and I'd measure them up with any men."

If Donovan had left it at that, his remarks would have been simply a commendable defense of soldiers who had served the nation well. However, Donovan went on to tell the committee that he did not "find they were Communists. I found that they were not." Given Donovan's dealing with Milton Wolff over recruiting Lincoln Brigade veterans, and given his negotiations with Dennis, he clearly concealed from Congress the extent of the OSS's dealings with the CPUSA. These days, for a senior intelligence official to so mislead a congressional committee would be regarded as worthy of a criminal charge.

The messages make clear where the loyalty of American Communists lay. Dennis notes that he and Browder awaited Comintern "instruction" about whether the CPUSA should cooperate with American intelligence to mount campaigns against Nazi Germany.

Dennis's statement to Dimitroff in 1942 that he had placed Communists in the propaganda arm of the OSS and the OWI confirms fragmentary evidence found in several places. Louis Budenz, once the editor of the *Daily Worker,* split with the party in 1945 and accused Dennis and others of cooperation with Soviet intelligence. Budenz's claim to have known of espionage operations has been ridiculed, and his not very credible testimony in the Owen Lattimore case and his bizarre story that Communists spoke in Aesopian language have led many historians to dismiss his claims. Dennis's 1942 message to Dimitroff, however, verifies Budenz's 1948 charge that during WWII Dennis had been "directing . . . agents in the Office of Strategic Services."

Earl Browder

In addition to his involvement with Dennis's OSS operation, Earl Browder, General Secretary of the CPUSA from 1930 to 1945, had other links to Soviet intelligence. Comintern files confirm charges made in the 1930s that Browder had family ties to the NKVD. In 1939 Benjamin Gitlow, briefly CPUSA General Secretary in 1929 before being expelled for ideological deviation, charged that Browder's sister, Margaret, was a "member of the military intelligence department of the Soviet government." That same year Walter Krivitsky, former head of the NKVD in Western Europe, wrote that Margaret, using a passport with the name of Jean Montgomery, had worked for Soviet intelligence. "During 1936-1937 she worked in Central Europe where she laid the ground for the establishment of our secret radio station," said Krivitsky. Krivitsky defected from the NKVD in 1937. Years later, State Department investigators determined that the photograph for the "Jean Montgomery" passport was that of Margaret Browder.

Margaret Browder left the CPUSA after it expelled her brother in 1946. In the 1950s she admitted to FBI agents that she had used the name Jean Montgomery to obtain a passport and had met with Vasily Zubilin, nominally third secretary in the Soviet embassy in Washington but actually the NKVD officer in charge of U.S. operations. When a grand jury asked her about her activities, she refused to answer on the grounds that her testimony might be self-incriminating. Her refusal was well advised, since Comintern files confirm she worked for the Soviet Union's intelligence services.

In January 1938 Earl wrote to Dimitroff. The contents of that letter are unknown, but in response Dimitroff wrote the following to Nikolai Yezhov, head of the NKVD: "I am sending you Comrade Browder's note . . . from this end, I consider it politically expedient to dismiss his sister from her position in the foreign bureau of the NKVD."

Comintern files also show that Browder acted as a talent scout. In November 1940 Dimitroff received a memo from General Fitin. A cover note signed by Lavrenti Beria, then head of the NKVD, conveyed the memo. Handwritten on Beria's note was the comment "Comrades Stalin and Molotov were informed about this." Fitin's memo summarized a report Browder gave to an NKVD officer about a meeting with Pierre Cot. A member of the French Radical party, Cot had arrived in the U.S. in September 1940, a refugee after the fall of France. Cot had served as aviation minister and commerce minister and had supported close French ties with the USSR.

Browder reported that Cot asked him to notify the USSR that he continued to work "for France's full alliance with the Soviet Union," a coalition that could "only be achieved through the French Communist Party." Cot also said that he was opposed to the Vichy regime. At this time the Soviet Union, in line with the Nazi-Soviet Pact, was not hostile to the Vichy government. Cot, Browder noted, "wants the Soviet government to know he is ready to complete any task for us; he is even prepared to change his position." In short, Cot was offering to abandon his anti-Vichy position and embrace the Soviets' stance. After WWII Cot re-entered

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French politics, becoming once again aviation minister for a time. He championed French-Soviet friendship and in 1953 received the Stalin Peace Prize. A recent history of Soviet intelligence notes that after World War II U.S. cryptographers decoded wartime NKVD messages from the U.S. to Moscow indicating that Cot was recruited as a Soviet agent in 1942 by Vasily Zubilin.

Hiss, Peters, and Navasky

In the post–World War II era no episode did more to implant the notion of a Communist underground in American minds than the Hiss-Chambers case. Some segments of the American left and some historians not only refuse to believe that Alger Hiss was a spy, but remain incredulous that any kind of Communist underground existed. During the controversy over Allen Weinstein's *Perjury* (1978), a book that concluded that Hiss was guilty, Victor Navasky, editor of the *Nation,* cast doubt on Weinstein's assertion that J. Peters, a central figure in Whittaker Chambers's story, was the head of the CPUSA's underground operations in the 1930s.

Peters, a Hungarian-born Communist, immigrated to the U.S. in 1924 and held a variety of positions in the CPUSA, heading its Hungarian bureau, serving as Organizational Secretary and gaining membership on the Central Committee. Peters never became a U.S. citizen, and after investigators discovered he had used false passports to travel to the USSR, he was deported to Hungary in 1949. He later edited the *International Review,* a Soviet-sponsored journal of international press opinion. Chambers asserted that Peters, in addition to his public role, was head of CPUSA secret work and liaison between the CPUSA underground and Soviet intelligence.

Navasky agreed that Peters was "a well-known Communist Party official in the 1930s" but reported that he "denied participation in any 'Communist underground,'" suggesting by use of quotation marks that there was no such thing. Further, the *Nation* asked journalist Donald Kirk to stop by Peters's home in Budapest in 1978 for a chat. Kirk found Peters (then calling himself Jozsef Peter) to be "a skeptic, an intellectual who cannot help but perceive humor in the posturing and maneuvering." Kirk quoted him as calling the charge he did secret work for the American Communist party "nonsense." "This is so stupid—the 'secret Communist' and 'not-secret Communist,'" Peters said. His wife told Kirk that Peters was "very good-natured . . . very jolly." Kirk felt badly for having "intruded upon the inner contentment they have known here since the turmoil of their lives in America." But Peters's life in America had been full of turmoil precisely because Peters was a key link between the CPUSA and Soviet intelligence.

In 1930, the Comintern reminded non-Soviet Communist parties that "legal forms of activity must be combined with systematic illegal work." That same year a Comintern official, B. Vassiliev, sent a memo to the CPUSA insisting that "all legal Parties are now under the greater responsibility in respect to the creation and strengthening of an illegal apparatus. All of them must immediately undertake measures to have within the legally existing Party committees an illegal directing core." American Communists needed little urging; in 1929 they had pledged to "make all necessary preparations for illegal functioning of the leading organs of the Party."

The person chosen to head the secret apparatus was Jolly J. Peters. Peters was in Moscow in 1932 as an instructor at the Lenin School for Communist cadres. A newly discovered Comintern document entitled "Short Report on the Work of the Secret Apparatus of the U.S. Communist Party," said of Peters that the Central Committee of the CPUSA "upon his return from Moscow . . . commissioned him to work in the secret apparatus. He remained in that capacity until June of 1938." The report, dated January 1939, went on to say: "The Secret Apparatus of the U.S. Communist Party has operated for about four years. The head of operations for the entire period had been Comrade Peters. On [indecipherable] June 1938, Peters was

(continued on page 42)

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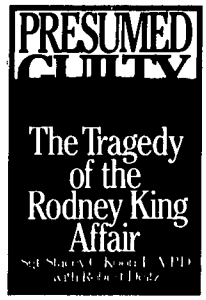

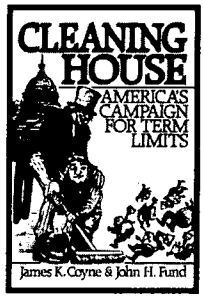

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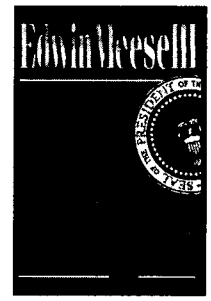

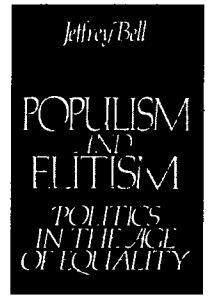

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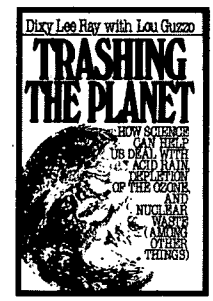

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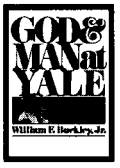

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reassigned to other work and replaced by Comrade Baker."

Peters's direction of the Secret Apparatus in the period 1934 to 1938 raises the question of involvement of the CPUSA underground in Communist infiltration of the U.S. government. The most controversial part of Chambers's story involved Peters's supervision of several small groups of Communists employed by the U.S. government in Washington during the 1930s. According to Chambers, these groups provided the CPUSA with information and promoted Communist influence within the government. Those who had access to important information were turned over to Soviet intelligence. In particular, Chambers described the operation of the Ware Group. This group, first supervised by the Communist farm policy specialist Harold Ware, initially consisted of young professionals who worked for the New Deal's Agricultural Adjustment Administration. According to Chambers, Hiss belonged to this group; he was one of those later moved over to work for Soviet intelligence, with Chambers as his contact. Hiss denied Chambers's charges, and was convicted of perjury. Although Weinstein's *Perjury* supports Chambers, numerous historians refuse to accept Chambers's story about Communist infiltration of New Deal agencies.

There is no basis for denying that the Ware Group existed. In addition to Chambers, Nathaniel Weyl and Lee Pressman confirmed they had been members, and Josephine Herbst confirmed her husband's membership. Even so, a number of historians prefer Pressman's characterization of the Ware Group to Chambers's. In 1950, after years of denying party membership, Pressman testified that in the 1930s he had been a Communist and a member of the Ware Group, and had met with Peters. However, Pressman depicted the group as an innocuous club of government employees who got together to discuss Marxist theory.

Speaking to these issues are other documents found in Comintern files. One confirmation of Peters's role in supervising Washington Communists is in the just-discovered minutes of the CPUSA's "District Buro #34" (Maryland-D.C.), which describe Comrade Peters as the leader of a delegation to a regional party conference. Another memo, labeled "Top Secret," is addressed to Dimitroff and dated March 5, 1943. The message read: "According to a report from our representative in the USA, a group of Communists assigned by the leadership of the American Communists for informant work is active in Washington. This group is headed by Central Committee worker 'Peter.'"

This Soviet memo does not identify the members of this group and could not be referring to the Ware Group, which had long dispersed by 1943. It is likely that "Peter" is "J. Peters" because he is known to have used "Peter" frequently as a pseudonym, and he worked for the Central Committee after stepping down as head of the party underground. Its damning words about "a group of Communists assigned by the leadership of the American Communists for informant work" proves that at least one of the Communist clubs in Washington did more than discuss Marxist theory.

Historians must recognize the extent to which the cooperation of American Communists with Soviet intelligence in the 1940s compromised those who reached out to Communists and treated them as legitimate political allies.

Rudy Baker and Son

The "Short Report on the Work of the Secret Apparatus of the U.S. Communist Party" was written by Peters's successor, Rudy Baker. In January 1939, Baker visited Moscow for consultations with Comintern officials. The Comintern's Cadre Department sent Baker's report to Dimitroff with a cover letter stating, "The report was written at our request." Baker, born in Yugoslavia in 1898, immigrated to the U.S. at an early age and became a naturalized citizen. He joined the American Communist party at its founding in 1919 and studied at the Lenin School in Moscow from 1927 to 1930. When he returned to the U.S. in 1930 he became head of the CPUSA's Organizational Department and in 1931 became a member of the prestigious Central Committee. Later he became a member of the Central Control Commission, a body charged with maintaining internal party discipline and ideological purity. A Comintern biographical report on Baker stated that in the early 1930s he was "partly involved in illegal work/ Korea, England, Canada." This confirms a Louis Budenz assertion in 1948 that Baker had worked for Soviet intelligence in Canada.

Baker wrote that when he was named head of the Secret Apparatus, "this was known only to comrades Browder, Stachel, Weiner, Peters and now Pat Toohey." Jack Stachel was the party's organizational secretary. William Weiner was the party's financial secretary. Pat Toohey was the CPUSA's representative to the Communist International in Moscow in 1939. Baker explained that the organization set up by Peters was financed by a secret group with "no ties to any party organization and their names are secret."

Baker emphasized that he had made improvements in Peters's arrangements. Peters did not have a full-time party post that provided cover for his secret work. Consequently, Baker explained, a "shortcoming of the Secret Apparatus project was that everyone found out Peters was in charge." By contrast, Baker continued in his existing party posts on the Central Control Commission and several other party commissions, making "it unnecessary for anyone to think about or guess in which kind of work Baker engages. . . . Baker's special work remains unnoticed and secret."

Baker's report also mentioned that "Comrade Andreev has suggested that the [CPUSA] Central Committee think about the question of preserving the leading cadres in the case of [war] mobilization, and the possibility of transferring them to

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illegal [underground] positions. I will take all of this to my meeting with comrade Browder upon my return." Eight months later World War II began. The CPUSA, in accordance with the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, fervently attacked FDR's policy of assisting those fighting Hitler. Fearing it might be made illegal, the CPUSA sent Eugene Dennis and several other key cadres underground. The Baker report indicates that this action stemmed from a Soviet suggestion and that the Secret Apparatus may have been charged with establishing the underground. Dennis and the others resurfaced after Hitler attacked the USSR in June 1941. At that time the CPUSA shifted from ardent opposition to FDR's policies to bellicose support for them. In 1950, expecting a Soviet-American war and U.S. suppression of the party, the CPUSA sent several hundred key cadres underground in a carefully prepared and elaborate replay of the 1939-41 exercise. The party ordered its hidden cadres to surface in 1955.

The Comintern's files include two documents showing that Rudy Baker's Secret Apparatus had ties to the NKVD and recruited American Communists for Comintern operations during World War II. One document is a five-page report dated 1943 on the network, written by its chief member, who used the code-name "Son." The other document is a 1942 memo from Fitin of the NKVD conveying a message to Dimitroff signed by Son. In his cover note for Son's message, Fitin says: "We are sending you a telegram we received from Rudy in your name from New York." Son, thus, was Rudy Baker. His message to Dimitroff read: "The audibility is good, 8-9. One of your new drivers is often negligent in his work."

In his 1943 report Son/Baker noted that the war had made communications a problem. Legal mail service was disrupted, and in response, "we . . . use seamen to deliver" packages, although, Son noted, "seamen communications . . . are also unpredictable" due to the irregularity and secrecy of wartime ship movements. In part due to these problems, the network was "cooperating very closely with Cooper which accounts also for his helpful aid in communications with you." "Cooper" was the code name of Vasily Zubilin, head of NKVD U.S. operations. The FBI identified Zubilin as Cooper when its hidden listening devices recorded a secret meeting between Steve Nelson, a Communist party organizer, and Cooper/Zubilin in 1943. Nelson, born in Croatia, had shared an apartment with Baker in the late 1920s and, like him, had worked abroad for the Comintern. Son/Baker also reported that a member of the network had been temporarily loaned to Cooper for "auto building work," which likely referred to setting up a radio station. Son/Baker noted difficulties with his organization's work because most members of the apparatus were under 40 and had been drafted or had taken jobs in war-related industries to gain exemption. The California portion of the apparatus was particularly hard-hit, since several "drivers" had gone into military service. Based on the 1942 Son message, "drivers" appears to be a euphemism for radio operators.

Son reported that his network was "kept strictly isolated from party as before." Son said, "While the [Communist] party generally is functioning on the war efforts entirely openly and enjoys greater legal freedom than ever, the FBI and military intelligence has not decreased its surveillance. . . . This requires that we . . . maintain our contacts with Father and other vital comrades with greatest care. . . . Periodically all questions are discussed and considered [by Father and Son]." "Father" is thus identified as the link between the network and the CPUSA leadership.

The longest section of the report dealt with "your request for Japanese comrades." This presented a problem, said Son. While Sanzo Nosaka, a leading Japanese Communist who spent the 1930s in the United States, knew a number of reliable cadres, the detention of West Coast Japanese and Japanese-Americans had cut off communications with them. Two comrades, "Joe" (Joe Koide) and "Saito" (Shuji Fuji), were originally ordered to move to Colorado to avoid internment and to publish a Communist Japanese-language paper. This plan was canceled at the last minute and they went into the camps. Saito soon was hired by the Office of War Information for work on Japanese language radio propaganda. While the apparatus had lost contact with Saito, Son reported that "it does not necessarily follow that he has betrayed the party by accepting such a post." Joe was still in the camps. Son said, "We should be informed whether you are primarily interested in the Jap comrades born in Japan (Issei) or also in American born Japanese (Nissei)." Several of the issues discussed in the Son report were also discussed by Nelson and Zubilin when they met in April 1943. The FBI summary of the secretly recorded conversation states: "The principal activities which were not being conducted to Nelson's satisfaction were contacts with Japanese Communists in the relocation centers and the handling of literature and other documentary material which was being transmitted to points in the South Pacific by Communist seamen couriers."

These documents from the Comintern archives provide a glimpse of the hidden world of American Communism. Those who have insisted that there was a fire break between the CPUSA and Soviet intelligence operations were wrong. Those who have insisted that suspicions about the loyalty of American Communists in the 1940s and 1950s were without basis were wrong. None of this justifies the excesses of the McCarthy period, the use of anti-Communism as a partisan weapon through the mendacious blurring of the distinction between Communism and liberalism; or the irresponsible use of unverified charges and even faked evidence for political gain. It does mean, however, that historians must recognize the extent to which the cooperation of American Communists with Soviet intelligence in the 1940s compromised those who reached out to Communists and treated them as legitimate political allies. It also means that historians dealing with American Communism and anti-Communism must recognize that the CPUSA was not just another political party, albeit a radical one. The American Communist party simultaneously carried on open radical political activity, concealed political activity, and secret cooperation with and participation in Soviet intelligence activities. ❐

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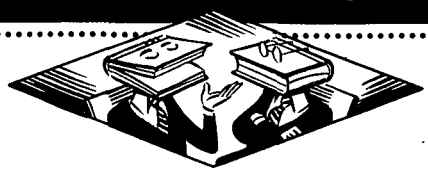

Tina on Top

by Donald Lyons

In the days of the old *New Yorker* the joke ran: "What are the seven deadliest words in the English language?" Answer: "First of four parts by Ved Mehta." All that has changed. Slicker, faster, shorter, smarter, more breathlessly *now*, bulging with the swollen muscles of Calvin Klein models, smelling of Narcisse (from Parfums Chloe, Paris, available at Macy's), Tina Brown's *New Yorker* hit the stands dancing on October 5.

The magazine had no place to go but up. In its pre-WWII adolescence, it had incarnated a nervous snobbery, a provincial insecurity terribly afraid America was the land of the Philistines and terribly eager to distance itself from that America. Little that was vital in American culture in the 1930s showed up in the *New Yorker*, which stayed snooty and aloof. In 1943, Edmund Wilson became the book reviewer, and after the war, the rag got religion. The fiction became earnest and full of angst—Cheever, Updike, Salinger. Distinctive critical voices like Croce on dance and Kael on film were allowed room to breathe; the era of lazy contempt for the arts was over.

Most tellingly, the weekly began swallowing, like a python ingesting a hedgehog, huge raw gobs of the real world. High lama William Shawn ran John Hersey on Hiroshima, Rachel Carson on the shoreline, James Baldwin on the fireline, and Jonathan Schell on the coming apocalypse. Alarm bells were constantly ringing on 43rd Street. And the Talk of the Town was lacing its trademark preciosity with ritual anti-Americanism. It was, to quote Leonard Maltin on *Lost Horizon*, "a strange Tibetan land where health, peace, and longevity reign."

The end of the Cold War and its purchase by the Newhouse empire left the *New Yorker* stranded. Newhouse suavely dumped Shawn despite restive mutterings from his cult. The regime of Bob Gottlieb was of a Chernenko-like brevity. True, in his time, the magazine spewed prodigies of loathing on U.S. forces in the Gulf, but the snake was tired. With capitalism triumphant and even the Democratic party in detox, the time was at hand for an *aggiornamento* on 43rd Street.

Tina Brown was the necessary choice. A master trend-sniffer, she had confected at *Vanity Fair* a perfect vehicle for the liberal opposition in the 1980s: Madonna and the Sandinistas were all somehow involved in making a fabulous fashion statement. At the same time in Washington, the *New Republic* was positioning itself as a voice of sober leftism, willing now and again to knock some of the wilder vagaries of, say, multiculturalism. And so, in search of a leaner, hipper leftism, Tina quickly grafted the mind of the *New Republic* (ex-editor Hendrik Hertzberg signed on to write the editorial-like Comment and Sidney Blumenthal, Clinton's Vishinsky, is to replace the soporific Elizabeth Drew as D.C. stringer) to the metabolism of Manhattan hip (James Wolcott from *Vanity Fair* is covering TV, and Stephen Schiff, also from there, will do . . . it's not clear what, for the Kael-soundalikes Terrence Rafferty and Michael Sragow are still on the film beat).

Issue No. 1 *sub regno Tinae* featured on the cover a colored drawing of a bejewelled pimp type being driven in an open carriage through an autumnal Central Park. The concept showed, perhaps, a certain capacity for self-mockery on the part of the new administration. Tone-setting "copy" began with a lecture in Comment on the fact that "the genius of Western commercial republics—whether they lean toward democratic capitalism or call themselves social democracies—is that they balance the inequalities of their economic arrangements with the egalitarianism of their political ones." The genius of this slippery parlance is to conceal its true love, egalitarianism, behind a show of affection for "commercial republics." Robert Hughes weighed in from Barcelona, his turf, with the horrified report that the 1996 Atlanta Olympics had adopted as its emblem what looked like a pro-life fetus. Holy termination! "No decent person pretends that abortion does not present a grave moral choice," Hughes wrote, "but the point is that this choice must be made by the mother, not denied by the

Donald Lyons is a regular contributor to the New Criterion *and the* Wall Street Journal.

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state." ("Mother" of what, pray?) Then a long "investigative" piece by Mark Singer tried clumsily to bake a loaf of scandal out of that guy who claims he's being denied parole because he sold dope to Quayle.

Issue No. 2 sported a collage of Malcolm the Tenth on the cover and a restrained assessment of the man by Marshall Fraddy within. Inside, too, was a profile by celebrity Brit journalist Joan Juliet Buck of thinking Brit hunk Daniel Day-Lewis, currently starring in *The Last of the Mohicans*. A comment often heard about Issue No. 2 was that Tina Brown was shilling for the upcoming Spike Lee movie on Malcolm and for *Mohicans*. Whatever the faults of the old *New Yorker*, went the rap, at least it wasn't *Entertainment Weekly* blah blah blah. I say, so what? In for a penny, in for a pound.

But graver moral and tribal issues exploded à propos Issue No. 2, when John le Carré took umbrage, as reported in the October 15 *New York Times*, over a truly nasty, vile, *ad hominem* dismissal by Francis Wheen of William Shawcross's upcoming Rupert Murdoch bio. The currents of rancor and greed running here are deep and treacherous and too tricky to navigate: Murdoch vs. Newhouse; Tina's hubby Harold Evans, fired by Murdoch years back from the London *Times* and now a Random House publisher; the British Random House is publishing the Murdoch bio; etc. But le Carré scored big, saying, "Through this little window . . . you can detect the entry of the degenerate British standards of journalism. . . . Within weeks of taking over the *New Yorker*, you [Ms. Brown] have sent up a signal to say that you will import English standards of malice and English standards of inaccuracy."

Le Carré is correct, of course, but it is hard to work up much sympathy for William Shawcross, whose earlier opus *Sideshow*, a strained displacement of responsibility for the Khmer Rouge genocide from its authors to Henry Kissinger, was just the sort of radical-chic finger food Tina loved to excerpt. Shawcross has in this instance just been caught at the wrong Duchess's Mayfair party. Tina Brown's frivolous defense—"It was much discussed in the Hamptons this summer"—plunged the whole affair with its stupidity and snobbery into the world of Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies*, where "Mr. Chatterbox" clashes with the "social editress of the *Daily Excess*." Tina Brown seems an "empowered" version of Agatha Runcible.

Kinder, gentler socialist Paul Berman turned up in No. 2. Honored by all for braving the ire of the hard left by saying that Sandinista Nicaragua was not Utopia, Berman used William F. Buckley, Jr.'s book on anti-Semitism to trumpet the "irreparable collapse" of the "modern conservative movement" that "Buckley . . . founded in the mid-nineteen-fifties." No, Paul, don't confuse a little housecleaning with collapse. Conservatism, born not in the 1950s but, let us say, in 1776 or in the fifth century B.C., will last as long as the love of liberty.

James Wolcott examines in a surprisingly sharp tone of voice the cuddly Clintonization of prime-time TV by Bill-pal Linda Bloodworth-Thomason's PC sitcoms. Adam Gopnik pays a moving

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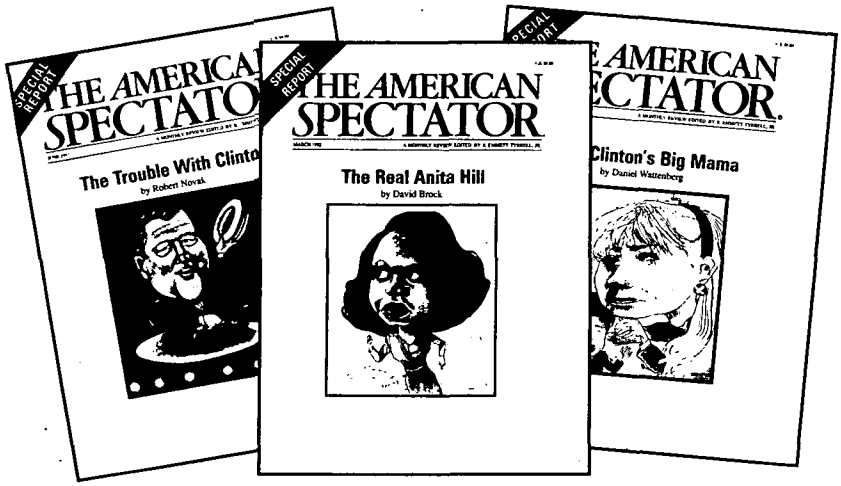

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tribute to Matisse as one who "became a great painter by allowing the most mundane middle-class values—the concern with order, the valuing of privacy, the appetite for a composed and managed world—to speak through the amplification of art." The Comment in No. 2 is on police and tapes; after a ritual demonization of the LAPD, it exonerates Michael O'Keefe, the young NYPD cop forced to shoot a drug dealer; it omits mention, though, of the subsequent canonization of the dealer by Mayor Dinkins. This yes-but Comment made a clear contrast to the previous week's demonization of the NYPD by old-regime City Hall reporter Andy Logan—a performance Logan immediately followed with a swooning eulogy for pro-Castro, pro–Maurice Bishop Ted Weiss. Garry Wills, the Hillary scholar, offered a throbbing profile of Clinton flack James Carville, who so wonderfully marries a progressive heart to a hard strategic head, so unlike the unlamented Lee Atwater.

Issue No. 3 hit Euro-themes. George Steiner declared that a book on Nietzsche's unsavory sister does not understand Nietzsche so well as he, George Steiner. Ian Buruma, so brilliant on Leni Riefenstahl in a recent *TLS*, neatly skewered the over-the-top German-hating of German oracle Günther Grass. Prickly Czech dissident Ian Kavan was defended (sort of) against charges of collaboration with the old Commie secret police by Lawrence Weschler, who reserved his keenest distaste for "rightists" and "right-wing parliamentarians" who "lurched wildly to the right, well beyond Thatcherism in their embrace of the presumed curative powers of the freest possible market." He calls Vaclav Klaus "perhaps Czechoslovakia's most articulate and compelling advocate of the fastest possible conversion to the most extreme free-market economy as the ideal solution for all the woes of post-Communism." Weschler, in his long-windedness, seems to be having a bit of trouble climbing clear of old–*New Yorker* rhetoric.

But despite such occasional retro-left melodies, the main burden of the *New Yorker* is the Tina-tune: self-critically left, disillusionedly hip, but hungry for a new Sixties—not unlike, say, a solemn but cute Rhodes Scholar taking a day trip down from Oxford to figure prominently in a centrist demo in support of Ho Chi Minh. ❐

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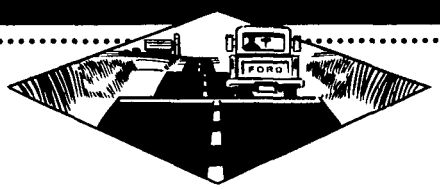

Bum Steer

by Sandy Hume

The rodeo that came to Washington on October 4 was not your ordinary cowboy affair. "The Atlantic Stampede," as it was called, was a gay rodeo, the first such event staged east of the Mississippi. One participant touted the competition as "a chance for gays and lesbians to get together in a non-threatening environment, to celebrate what it means to be gay." Another explained, "It gets gays out of bars and into a constructive activity. We get to share a sense of camaraderie, of teamwork, and of love."

"We also break down the oppressive stereotypes that mainstream society pins on us," added a spectator. "You know, it's not like we're all just a bunch of hairdressers."

No event in modern times, it seems, can successfully avoid the wrath of protesters, "The Atlantic Stampede" included. A small but vocal collection of homosexual animal rights activists, from organizations like the "Gay and Lesbian Animal Rights Caucus" and the "Eco-Dykes," stood outside the entrance and chided all who entered. Their signs read "GAYBOYS SAY WHOA TO RODEO!" "ONLY SISSIES ABUSE ANIMALS," and "QUEERS DON'T LET QUEERS BASH ANIMALS." For a while, they chanted "DON'T BE A MEAN QUEEN!" until someone came up with "HEY DYKE! HEY QUEEN! RODEO IS OBSCENE!" Having grown tired of this, they settled on a simple berating: "SHAME! SHAME! SHAME! SHAME!" Two thousand rodeo-goers filed past, indifferent to the cries of their indignant brethren.

Inside, just past the square-dancing tent, Miss International Gay Rodeo 1992 extended a warm welcome. Wearing a long, white dress and heels, she stood about 6'2", and had a voice as deep as James Earl Jones's. She wasn't bad-looking, really, just in need of a shave.

Sandy Hume is The American Spectator*'s editorial intern.*

Beyond her stood the vending tent, where merchants peddled jewelry, clothing, books, and videos. T-shirts were the main attraction, and they invariably featured some sort of sexual reference: "He's Not My Boyfriend, He's My Ride!" or "Stop That Man . . . I Want to Get Off" or "If You Rope Me You Can Ride Me." Others reflected that odd modern phenomenon: the adoption of pejorative labels as symbols of pride. Plain white shirts with "Cowfag," "Cowdyke," and "Queers on Steers" printed on the front sold briskly.

The Clinton-Gore campaign had a prominent display, with buttons, bumper stickers, and other assorted promotional materials for sale. Much of it was anti–Bush/Quayle; one button read "Hate Is Not a Family Value." The raciest item was a T-shirt with a picture of Bill and Al, clad only in their underwear, embracing one another and grinning broadly.

The literary section offered a broad range of books by gay authors, like *Not All Parents Are Straight* and the best-selling *Honor Bound*, which sat alongside more risqué offerings, such as *10 1/2 Inches!* and *Meat Rack*. Other books offered advice on how to "come out" or *How to Find a Gay Escort in San Francisco* (presumably from the publishers of *How to Find a Senior Citizen in Florida*).

The program listed numerous corporate sponsors, including Pepsi, Dodge/-Chrysler, and Miller Lite (*"The official beer of the International Gay Rodeo Association"*). A public service announcement reminded readers that "Real Cowboys Always Wear Their Chaps." Rep. Gerry Studds sent his regards in a full-page letter.

Out in the ring, contestants ran through all the usual events: bronco busting, steer wrestling, calf roping, barrel racing, and the like. Midway through the calf roping, a pair of protesters, tired of chanting "Shame!" in an empty parking lot, brought their appeals inside. They marched across the bottom row of the bleachers holding a banner that read "Stop Bashing Animals!" They were promptly bashed themselves. Two men doused them with beer (much of which landed on the hissing fans in the front row). Security then ejected the youths, who, as one woman pointed out, were wearing suede boots. Those affiliated with the rodeo were irritated by the demonstrators because, in one man's words, "those idiots haven't bothered to find out that we're putting on the most humane rodeo possible. We're using blunted spurs and breakaway roping"—where the lasso is pulled taut on the calf or steer and then released—"and no electric prods."

Although most activities were taken from orthodox rodeo, certain events were designed for the gay circuit. In the "drag queen race," a gay and a lesbian attempted to subdue a steer, until a man dressed in drag could jump on its back and ride it across the finish line. In the "goat dressing" competition, a team of two tried to grab hold of a goat tethered to a stake, after which they worked to fit a pair of jockey shorts onto its hind legs.

One of the Eco-Dykes, who opposed the event on the grounds that it was "sexist, offensive, and cruel," asked me: "How would you feel if you were chained up in a ring in front of screaming people and chased down by two men wanting to bind your back legs with a pair of underwear?" Point taken.

Come sundown, as the crowds moseyed through a dusty parking lot to their cars, the mood was jubilant. "We came, we saw, and we kicked some rodeo butt!" exclaimed one man. In overturning stereotypes they had certainly achieved a measure of success. A bunch of hairdressers they were not. Goat-dressers, yes. But hairdressers, no. ❐

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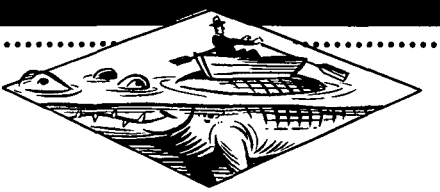

Good Riddance?

by Juris Kaza

Paplaka, Latvia

The name of this little village in western Latvia, the site of a Russian helicopter base, is suggestive of the Latvian word for collapse by deflation: *saplaksana*. "Paplaka" suggests partial deflation or sagging, like that of a mushroom past its prime.

My freelance television crew and I arrived in Paplaka and drove directly to the gray and dismal multi-story military housing that dominates this village of single-family dwellings. Most of the military apartments appeared empty, their windows broken or the panes covered with Russian newspapers. The Russians had simply gone—no one had announced their departure, and no one mourned their passing. Once the target of demonstrations by local residents and independence activists, Paplaka was now strangely quiet. The gates to the base were open, and a plaque proclaiming the glory of Soviet aviators decorated an empty plinth.

We walked unhindered into a facility from which attack helicopters had once thundered over the landscape, frightening cattle, chickens, and children at all hours. Near the gates, a hatless man in a leather jacket and camouflage pants came up and introduced himself as "the unit commander." For the next hour, as we filmed, the Commander rambled amiably on and on about how "Latvians, Russians, Uzbeks, Gypsies, and everybody else are people who want to be happy, if only we all understood how we are all just people and part of the human race." The Russian officer was, as my Latvian girlfriend whispered, "s---faced."

So were many of the others in a ragtag crew loading hampers, bookcases, and office desks onto two attack helicopters. An officer with a mustache like that of a czarist dragoon climbed aboard one of them, waving a fencing sword. Even as the choppers revved up, two men ran toward them, carrying heavy loads. Was it the last of the base's secret documents? To my eyes, the bags dramatically shoved aboard through the cockpit windows were bulging with—potatoes. Or maybe onions. It was hard to see in the stinging rotor wash that kicked up leaves, twigs, and spatters of mud.

A skeleton crew remained at the base, standing in the mud among fallen-down fences and vandalized shacks that once housed the mighty airmobile unit. Nearby, two trucks were

loaded with pipes, radiators, and cement panels ripped from structures on the base. Perhaps they were headed for the huge scrap-metal foundry in nearby Liepaja, where we had just seen workers cannibalizing several armored personnel carriers.

A hundred yards away, in a steel-matted helicopter parking area now littered with smashed vehicles and the remains of a radar station, a Latvian farmer and his son calmly picked through the wreckage. They had driven in with a tractor and a small crane. "I let them in for a bottle of vodka. Let 'em take what they want, what the hell," our ever-hospitable Commander remarked, back with us after disappearing for a few additional belts from the cognac bottle.

Another white-haired officer shrugged and said, "Both our people and your people [local Latvians] are looting. We punish those we catch. Everyone is carrying off whatever they can get their hands on."

It's getting harder and harder to decide whether to laugh or worry about the Russian military *Gotterdämmerung* in the Baltic States. In places like Paplaka, once-haughty military units appear to have collapsed into barely disciplined bands of uniformed scavengers, vandals, and drunks. But that is only half the picture.

In many places, there is a spiteful violence to the Russian departure. I visited a barracks in Riga that was vandalized with an intensity that Russians almost never put into constructive work. Giant kettles in the mess hall appeared to have been pounded loose from their moorings in the concrete floor with some huge, blunt object. A short distance away, the ceramic tiles had been meticulously peeled from the wall for sale, but a stained-glass window depicting the Riga Old Town skyline was smashed. The entire library of the barracks—a training center for construction troops—was tossed in a heap on the floor, the bookshelves smashed to splinters.

Sometimes the vandalism is passive—in Liepaja, a port and naval base in western Latvia, the Russians appear to be abandoning a huge munitions dump containing tens of thousands of tons of obsolescent arms. How the local authorities will prevent thieves and scavengers from entering the dump, and how the potentially unstable ordnance will be dis-

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armed, isn't Russia's problem anymore.

Tales of wholesale vandalism also come from Estonia. Journalists recently visiting the large submarine base at Paldiski reported scuttled warships and bizarre attempts to burn buoys and docks. It will cost Estonia huge sums simply to clean up the Paldiski harbor and to ascertain that no radioactive, toxic, or explosive materials have been dumped there. The demolition apparently started just weeks after Russia indicated to Estonia that it wanted to keep Paldiski as a strategic base even after other forces were withdrawn.

It is no surprise, then, that at some Russian bases the reception extended to unannounced visitors is less than cordial. In July, a squad of Russian marines in bulletproof vests surrounded the car I was riding in near the Mangalusala naval base outside Riga. The Russians locked and loaded their Kalashnikov assault rifles. Their commander, Captain Third Rank Aleksandr Zhebrik, demanded to know where our video camera and cassette were. We were intruders on Russian soil, he declared, and after a check of ID papers, the Russian officer announced that my Latvian cameraman and assistant could be summarily shot, while I, a "foreigner," could be thrown into the *kartser,* the solitary detention cell used in Gulag camps.

The incident was a sobering example of what some of the Russian military thought of Latvian sovereignty nearly a year after the nation regained its independence in the wake of the August coup. Russian forces in the Baltic continue to operate under vague but sinister orders authorizing the use of arms against any threats or "insults" to Russian soldiers, their families, or the "honor" of the Russian military. For every tipsy, merry Russian, there are others who are ready, willing, and able to shoot to kill to protect what they see as the legacy of their Russian Empire.

Such officers and their subordinates bring to mind the fall of another imperial ruling class in the Baltics—the Germans. In the wake of the German Empire's defeat in World War I, the Baltic German gentry, like today's Russian colonists, were threatened by the aspirations of the indigenous Baltic peoples for independence and democracy. Within weeks of the Armistice, and using the Bolshevik Revolution as a (possibly legitimate) excuse, German officers and the local aristocracy ignored the end of hostilities in Europe to start a *Freikorps*—a military force no longer under the control of the German state.

Although the Freikorps cooperated with Latvian forces in running out the Bolsheviks, it was clear that they intended to return German rule to the Baltics—if not with Berlin's support, then in the form of an autonomous German-ruled Baltic state. Besides strictly military activities, the Freikorps also raised funds to support itself and purported to offer the reward of colonial homesteads on Baltic soil to its recruits.

With a government in Moscow claiming to respect democracy and the sovereignty of the Baltics, the Russian colonists are in a position like that of the Baltic Germans in late 1918, and they harbor strikingly similar attitudes. For instance, Russian demands for "human rights" in the form of automatic Baltic citizenship and Russian as a second official language echo demands made in 1919 that the German language be given official status in Latvia, that the privileges of the landed aristocracy be preserved, and that ethnic German units be formed in the Latvian military.

If the Russian soldiers were looting simply for cash to buy homes when they returned to Russia, most Latvians would say, "Good riddance." But their spite and chauvinism lend credence to suspicions that many of them are building up "war chests" to underwrite renewed Russian domination of the Baltic nations. "All this talk that military property would be sold or leased to create a fund for returning soldiers is just talk," says Auseklis Plavins, a spokesman for Latvia's Defense Ministry. "We're talking about deals amounting to billions that are totally out of control."

One of the most spectacular arms deals conducted in violation of Latvian sovereignty—though apparently in accordance with Russian law—was the September 19 delivery of a Kilo-class submarine to Iran. The sub sailed from the Bolderaja naval base at the mouth of Riga harbor with a crew consisting largely of Russians paid up to $40 a day for their services in delivering the vessel to the Gulf. It is probably not the last such

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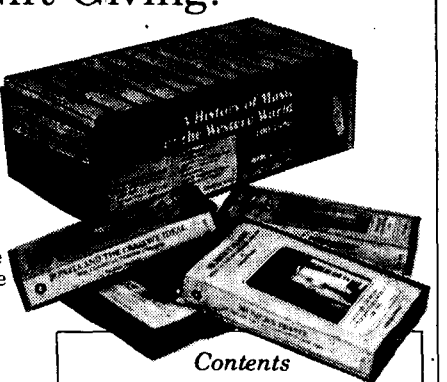

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deal, since a number of Iranians remained on the Russian base in Latvia, waiting for a second, and, possibly, a rumored third submarine.

Latvian Deputy Defense Minister Valdis Pavlovskis says Russian officers and retired military personnel in Latvia are also engaged in a wide range of activities aimed at subverting Latvia's independence. Pamphlets urging a return of "Soviet power" in Latvia have been printed at Russian army printing facilities. There are regular meetings of Russian veterans and paramilitary organizations and clubs that suggest a whole infrastructure of "civilian" support for the neo-Freikorps is being organized among the Russian population. One such manifestation was the loud, bizarre demonstration in front of Latvia's parliament by aging Russian hags and bemedalled geezers on behalf of Igor Parfyanov, a leader of the dread OMON paramilitary police, who was put on trial in September. The shrill senior citizens bellowed that Latvia was "Russian soil" and that Latvians were "fascists" who should be shot or deported. Igor Lopatin, a retired Soviet officer and a former leader of the banned hard-line Interfront, has founded a new Communist organization in Latvia, skirting the ban on the former Soviet Communist party imposed in the wake of the August coup.

I. Berezutsky, the commander of Naval Unit 69422 in Mangalusala, where I was held at gunpoint last July, is said by Defense Ministry officials to have been an ardent supporter of the August 1991 putsch. Three amphibious BTR6OBP armored personnel carriers used by the OMON are still reportedly hidden somewhere at his facility. Captain Zhebrik's marines, who chatted with my crew when the initial tension passed, freely admitted they had been smuggled in from Kaliningrad in violation of Moscow's promises not to reinforce its troops in the Baltic states.

These days, when the Western powers inform the Baltic countries that they have no alternative but to learn to live with their former colonizers, incredulous locals can only wonder: On whose terms? ❐

As we closed this issue, Russia announced that it was suspending withdrawal of the 130,000 troops still in the Baltics. —Ed.

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Set for Life

by Benjamin J. Stein

Sunday

New Orleans. I'm sitting up here on the stage of a huge meeting room at a hotel next to the Saint Dome or the SuperDome or something like that. There's a football game going on inside and we can occasionally hear the sound of thunderous cheers. On the other hand, this is Louisiana, not Los Angeles. Maybe it's real thunder.

The reason I'm on this stage is that I'm at a meeting of the wonderful North American Society of Securities Administrators. The panel is about ethics on Wall Street. There are lawyers for securities dealers, brokers, and underwriters on the panel, and there are consumer advocates on the panel, too. The discussion is getting fairly heated, and it's taken an interesting turn.

The lawyers who represent real-life defendants or potential defendants are basically saying that if they had extremely good reason to think that their clients had been doing insider trading, they would not notify the law. Nor would the lawyers notify the stockholders of the companies whose executives had broken the law. Basically, the lawyers would try to protect the managers who had broken the law, and not the stockholders and investors who pay their bills.

Every time yours truly asks (in a friendly, helpful tone) why the lawyers think they have no duty to obey the law, the lawyers tell me I'm naive, foolish, crazy, or being absurd.

It's getting to be real easy to see why people hate lawyers. I'm getting to hate them myself, and I am one.

This is part of my basic schema of reality, a little bit of which goes like this:

No one is less supportive of law than lawyers.

No one knows less about money than economists.

No one cares less about stockholders than their management.

No one hates war as much as soldiers.

No one dresses worse than clothing designers.

No one has worse hair than hair stylists.

No one knows less about human nature than psychologists.

No one is more serious and less funny than comedians.

From this I exempt my old Dad, who is an economist who knows quite a lot about money.

Sunday

Oh, this is really great, great stuff. Great stuff. I'm in Chicago, Illinois, to do a small part in the movie version of *Dennis the Menace*. The writer/producer is my pal and savior, John Hughes. It's a small part, but I am prostrate with gratitude to have it.

It's raining. Plus, it's cold. Plus, I'm tired. But it's still great because I get to have my face on the camera.

My old comrade in arms, John Coyne, lives here. So does my niece, Emily, a solid braino at the University of Chicago. So does her boyfriend, whom I will call Tom. I met them all for dinner at a miserable Italian place downtown. The meal was unremarkable except for the boyfriend, who had a truly electrifying perspective on society.

Tom, as I call him, had grown up in Singapore, where his father worked for a commodities firm. Then he had come to Chicago for school. Now he was out, and he was working at a "home" for homeless children. John Coyne had a good question about whether kids with guns who are 18 years old should be called "children," especially after they have just killed someone in a robbery.

Tom's views were fascinating. "I work with kids who have never known anything but violence and abuse," he said. "That's their lives. Getting hit, being mistreated, being abandoned. It really doesn't scare them to go to prison. They're used to very tough surroundings. What's amazing is that any of them, any of them at all, actually go to work in the morning, save money, and eventually get an apartment and have a life. Where that comes from is incredibly mysterious."

"Is there any hope for most of them?" I asked.

"If there is, I don't see what it is," he said. "It would have to come from a society entirely different from what ours is now."

I asked Tom what Singapore would do with lazy, rebellious, sullen, violent kids.

"They wouldn't be allowed to be sullen and lazy," he said. "The whole society makes young people work and be disciplined. The parents can be severely punished if the kids aren't doing their work. The kids are ostracized and no one will talk to them if they don't work. I've been thinking about this, and the whole time I was in Singapore, I don't remember any kids who were bad kids. The goal of social organization there is to make people learn and work and save, not to allow people to hurt themselves. That means a lot of repressed people. But it also means a society that's amazingly safe and productive, and where young people rarely hurt anyone. If they do, they get hit really, really hard."

It was all food for thought, until I phoned the A.D. on *Dennis* and found I had a 5:45 a.m. (yes, a.m.) call. Good-bye to philosophical musings. Time to sleep.→

Benjamin J. Stein is a writer, lawyer, economist, and actor living in Malibu, California.

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Monday

It was dark and rainy when the van came to get me. I wondered what the hell I was doing up at that hour. As soon as I got to the set, I knew.

Set life is paradise. Someone is looking after you every minute. There's a P.A. to follow your every move. Then there's hair and make-up and wardrobe. Wardrobe was particularly charming. It was run by a beautiful colleen named Brigitte Kelly. Daughter of Gene. She looked so frighteningly healthy it embarrassed me to mention how early it was or how cold.

I immediately went to the food table and fed myself things that will kill me: bacon, eggs, toast, even a banana. Then I went back to my trailer and put on Mozart's Requiem. I slept for about two hours before I had to do any real acting.

I play Mrs. Mitchell's boss, a mean-spirited, monotonous grouchy pompous fool. (Hmmm.) As we rehearsed, a woman actor who shall go unnamed was slightly condescending to me. Lea Thompson, the star, was almost mind-blowingly kind to me. She remembered (with some slight prodding) that we had worked together on *The Wild Life*, the sequel to *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, and she was the best friend I had that day. John Hughes came onto the set and we talked about the election. He's a major-league Republican, as worried about the direction of America as you or I. When the snippy actress saw us talking politics, she suddenly became friendly, too. Then everyone was pals.

(I DON'T EVER WANT TO HAVE TO LEAVE THE SET. I'll cry. I'll hurt myself. Please don't make me leave.)

John Hughes said that I could ad-lib my lines, and that was also a good big shot of paradise. I had ad-libbed the whole scene in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, and that had been the best day of my life, so I was loaded for bear.

I won't bore you with what I said. It was swell. Everyone on the set was laughing. That's a good sign. A really good sign. By the way, I'm never leaving the set.

Wednesday

A fugitive day here in Los Angeles. I'm off to be in a cartoon called "Animaniacs." I play—surprise, surprise—a man with a boring voice who accosts the main players at a party and bores them to death.

This is my first time doing a cartoon. The studio is off in the middle of nowhere east of Echo Park, in an area that's hard to find and somewhat anonymous even when you get there. It's a semi-warehouse, semi–down at the heels residential area very far from Spago and Morton's.

Still, every last one of us is desperately happy to be here. There are four other performers besides yours truly. Three men and a woman. Each one of them can do all kinds of clever voice imitations. One does a growling dog better than a dog. He can imitate a cat swallowing a hair ball. In a word, he's hilarious. I mean screaming. Same goes for the others. We each sit in a little booth made of slim partitions and read our parts into a microphone.

Then we do it again, and then we go home. The others are rushing like mad to get out the door, since this is their daily grind. For my part, I'm reluctant to leave at all. After all, this is set life again, and I love the attention and the money and everything else that goes with not being alone so much of the time.

Finally, the people in the control room left and then the janitors started to come in, so I guessed I would have to leave, too.

In my car, heading west to more familiar climes, I turned on a talk show. An extremely deferential white man was talking to someone called "Brother Green." As near as I could figure it, "Brother Green" was a teacher at a public school in downtown Los Angeles. He was being asked about how upsetting it was to the black students to have been near the riots last April.

"The thing is," said Brother Green (as best I can reconstruct it), "we don't call them riots. We call them 'the uprising.' We explain that these weren't criminals, or people who might hurt them, but rather people who were trying to gain the legitimate rights of African-Americans, and that this was a political act, and not a criminal act. This really helps the kids to get organized around the uprising and feel better about themselves. Once they realize that this was a legitimate political uprising, they feel a lot better."

Oh, good.

The interviewer then asked an Asian teacher about her pupils' response. She also said the kids felt better if they knew they were in the midst of a revolution, and not in some criminal setting.

What I love is that these dopes are being paid for this by the people of Los Angeles and the people of California, and by taxpayers everywhere. A race war in our time. It's coming. Mark my words. Maybe it's already here. I know this doesn't add to the charm of life, but it's true. When public school teachers who once knew better words now only use lies and inciting words and thumb their nose, anything goes.

Friday

Ha! I'm back on the gravy train. Back in paradise. Sandpoint, Idaho. My own version of paradise. It's swell. I flew up this afternoon with little Mr. Perfect by my side. He was a good boy. He wanted to look out at the scenery, but we were blocked by a big ugly jet engine for part of the way. Then from Portland to Spokane it was gorgeous again, and we could see it all perfectly.

We rented a Toyota Camry at the airport. "Daddy," Tommy asked, "is a Toyota a Japanese car ?"

"I think so," I said.

"Why don't you rent an American car?" he asked.

"Well, these cars are very reliable, and plus I think they're actually made in Tennessee."

"Is that America?"

"You bet," I said.

"Why don't you rent a Ford, Daddy? A Ford is definitely an American car."

"Well, next time, my boy," I said.

"This car smells like cigarettes," Tommy said. "I hate that smell."

"People are allowed to smoke," I said. "It's a free country."

"Well, I don't like it," Tommy said.

We got another Camry that did not smell of cigarettes, and off we went to Sandpoint. It was dusk, and I stopped at Lake Cocolalla to photograph the sun setting over the lake. It was still and cool and clear. A light ripple brushed the surface of the lake. I want to stay here forever, too.

After we checked into our very modest hotel, which is a good kind because it's occupied mainly by the world's most polite people, Canadians, and western Canadians at that, God's gift to the world, we went off with my pal Peter to see a local football game. In the crisp night, two teams hurled themselves at each other. Happy-looking kids in the stands milled about and laughed. A sweet girl named Amber came up to me and asked me for my autograph. Then half a dozen more asked and then two dozen and I was starting to feel nervous.

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I left, with Tommy, and with Amber's promise to baby-sit Tommy, so that I could stare at the lake and meditate.

Saturday

It's raining here in Northern Idaho. But it's just a light, pleasant drizzle, offering a glimpse of a damper world, and I like it. My pal Peter and I took Mr. Perfect fishing. Rather, Peter took him fishing. The fishing was done off a tiny raft in a beaver pond in Peter's back yard. I stood on the shore and worried that Tommy might fall in. He didn't. Peter caught a tiny brook trout for him, and everything was copacetic. Tommy even threw the fish back.

Then, off through the drizzle to the mountain lair of Frank S., fabulously successful advertising producer. We all sat in Frank's huge living room and looked out at the lake far below. Frank and Peter drank $200-per-bottle Montrachet. Tommy slid on the South American hardwood floor. He also clambered on the custom-made furniture.

Frank talked about being kidnapped and about how terrible life had gotten in America. Peter agreed. Tommy slid. Peter and Frank drank wine. Then Frank talked about how difficult human relationships were. Then he drank more wine. Then we talked about Bush and Clinton. Life seemed pretty bleak.

We went out to dinner at a nearby German restaurant. The guests stared at me and a teenage boy started to ask for my autograph, but Frank shooed him away. Broasted chicken. A huge portion. Delicious. Salad and a vegetable. Seven dollars. As I ate my food, Peter asked the waitress for a Bud Light. "One Bud Light coming up," she smiled.

A moment later she returned and plunked down a Michelob Gold on the table in front of Peter. "One Michelob," she said proudly.

Peter didn't say anything. Frank laughed, and Tommy tried to kick me under the table.

Sunday

You can't quite imagine how beautiful a fall morning on a lake in Northern Idaho is. Picture frame houses on streets lined with oaks and maples turning yellow and gold. Picture honking geese lying off the lip of the lake, old people walking happily on the grass by the shore, and a cool breeze coming down

They called her the most dangerous criminal in Lithuania

Nijole Sadunaite

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from Canada ruffling the waters, but only barely. Picture Mr. Perfect running on the grass, scooping up leaves and tossing them into the air. Picture him sliding down a gleaming steel slide while Amber stands guard. I don't want to ever die.

Wednesday

Dinner at Spago for my pal Sid's birthday. Behind me sat Swifty Lazar. A few tables away was Tony Curtis. A few tables away also sat a table of pornography folks, including Al Goldstein. They looked happy, even giddy.

I got into a righteous fight with a woman at our table over abortion. As we argued, I looked about the room. Not one kind face, I thought. Not one contented face. Smirking faces. Frightened faces. Crazy faces. Get me out of here.

Saturday

I'm in Bethesda, Maryland, at the Holiday Inn on Wisconsin Avenue, for the thirtieth reunion of my Montgomery Blair High School class. It's not just good. It's another little bit of paradise.

For one thing, everyone here looks normal. There are mailmen, policemen, firemen, lawyers, doctors, Social Security workers, wives who don't work, even a few retired people. They look happy.

For another thing, they're amazingly friendly. They ask about my work, about Hollywood, about Trixie. My long-time best friend from youth, Barry Walker, sat next to me for hours. Barry was the first real friend I had after grade school. Now he's a lawyer in Palm Beach. I was very happy to see him.

Gay Patlen was there, still blond and beautiful, and still the best dancer in the class. Her husband, a policeman and also a Blair grad, is a great dancer, too. I still feel the embers of the crush I had on her thirty years ago. She hugged me and told me I was a star. I'm not, but I watched her dance for a long time. Maybe crushes are the only things that last.

For yet another thing, a lot of these people are sensible. They like a quiet life. They love their kids. They don't expect to be rich. They just want to live sensibly and pass whatever they know on to their kids. This makes sense to me. These people are also worried about the way the schools are going, the way crime is going, the sad fact that the safe life we had in 1962 is only a memory that their kids will not know—unless maybe they move to Idaho. ❐

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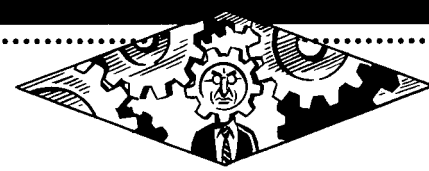

Demagoguing the Deficit

by Karl O'Lessker

At the second presidential debate on October 15, George Bush got flustered with a question on the budget and used the occasion to lash out at the way entitlements are budgeted: "I believe we need to control the growth of mandatory spending . . . that's the main growing thing in this budget. . . . Two-thirds of the budget, I as President never get to look at, never get to touch."

Bush struck a chord, for if there is one article of faith that unites budget analysts it is that "entitlements"—authorized by prior mandate and not subject to the normal appropriations process—are the largest single cause of our deficit woes. They note that entitlements now account for half the total federal budget, up from one-tenth thirty years ago.

It is true that the cost of entitlements has grown over the last decade, from $357 billion in FY 1982 (the first Reagan budget) to $687 billion in FY 1992—an increase of 192 percent during a period when the Consumer Price Index rose 48 percent. But there is variance among the programs: Social Security and Medicare more than doubled, from $199 billion to $400 billion, while the cost of other programs (e.g., Aid to Families with Dependent Children, for example) has barely kept up with inflation.

Conservatives who call for a reduction in benefits must offer a more compelling rationale than lumping Social Security in with all other entitlements, or labeling it "welfare," for it's important to distinguish between types of entitlements. Some are government income transfers out of general revenues, e.g., farm subsidies and welfare. Human resources, income security, veterans, agriculture, and housing programs accounted for outlays of $289.5 billion in FY 1991—46 percent of entitlement spending and 108 percent of that year's deficit. The remaining entitlement programs—Medicare, Disability, and Social Security, collectively known as OASDHI—make up half of all entitlements and pay their own way through dedicated payroll taxes.

Of these, Medicare outlays will exceed income in calendar year 1997—but for now Medicare runs a surplus, and helps balance the budget. Disability, though riddled with problems, took in $2.3 billion more than it spent last year, and will continue to do so for several more years. Social Security is by far the most important of these programs, and current projections made by the Social Security Administration (SSA) predict a $1-trillion surplus by the end of the century, which will peak at $5.5 trillion in 2025. During FY 1991 alone the Social Security trust fund took in $53.7 billion more in taxes and interest than it paid out in benefits. Whatever criticisms may be leveled against the system, aggravating the deficit problem isn't one of them. The FY 1991 deficit would have been almost 20 percent higher without the Social Security payroll tax.

All told, OASDHI trust funds in 1991 collected $377.6 billion in taxes and interest and paid out $344.4 billion in benefits and expenses, thus decreasing the deficit by $33.2 billion, or 12.4 percent. Can't some of this extra cash be used to pay the deficit down?

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In the all-important case of Social Security, probably not. Not if one confronts one of the complications of a modified "pay-as-you-go" system, which Social Security has been since the 1977 and 1983 amendments that rescued the trust fund from insolvency. Its most ardent defenders—the senior-citizen lobbies—point to a surplus of income over outlays. Those who would use Social Security's excess billions to reduce the deficit argue that the surplus doesn't justify the present level of benefits—today's retirees are getting far more out of the system than they put into it. And what they are getting is being financed by today's workers, who may not receive an equivalent level of benefits when *they* retire.

One way to ensure that they do is to cut benefits for those already on the rolls. The other way is to raise the Social Security payroll tax. They're both political suicide: as long as surpluses mount, there's no chance that Congress will do either. On the contrary, an influential minority of members, led by Senator Moynihan, has been pressing for Social Security tax *cuts*, and the longer the economy remains sluggish, the more likely that such a cut will be enacted. Moynihan's greatest concern is the regressivity of the Social Security financing mechanism—the flat-rate payroll tax, which takes more from American wage earners than does the income tax. Granted, the steep rise in the taxable wage base—now $55,500, up from $29,700 in FY 1982—reduces the degree of regressivity. It is nevertheless true, as Senator Moynihan has argued, that using any part of the proceeds from the Social Security tax to pay government's current bills amounts to requiring lower income workers to pay more than their fair share. Cutting benefits to reduce the deficit would only compound that inequity.

And there is not as much room for cutting as some might think, particularly if one looks at the Social Security "replacement rate"—the proportion of a retired worker's pre-retirement income provided by his pension. Most Ameri-cans would assume—considering the benefit hikes of the 1960s and the across-the-board 20 percent increase of 1972—that the current replacement rate is well above what the founders envisioned in the late 1930s.

It isn't. As Robert J. Myers, the longtime chief actuary of the SSA, demonstrates in *Social Security* (1985), average replacement rates are almost exactly the same as those set in the 1939 amendments: 41 percent today versus 40 percent in 1939 for a single worker, 62 percent today versus 60 percent for a married couple. As Robert Ball, the longest-serving Social Security commissioner, has written, "It is just not true . . . that the benefits have been greatly liberalized and that the program has departed from the modest goals of the system's founders." The program has expanded, of course, but the *benefits* have not become more generous.

There are other ways of looking at the evidence: From 1940 to 1991, while the CPI rose 953 percent, Social Security benefits rose 2,785 percent—three times as much as the CPI. Similarly, the maximum payroll tax on employee and employer combined went from $60 a year to $5,980—more than ten times the CPI. And the total amount of Social Security tax collections skyrocketed, from $605 million to $279 *billion*, over forty-eight times greater than the increase in the CPI.

But income tax collections grew slightly more, and average monthly benefits stayed within about 2 percent of per capita disposable income. While indicating how much higher benefits have to be if they are to meet the standards of "adequacy" established by Social Security's founders, the numbers suggest a benefit structure almost precisely in line with the 1939 goals.

So, if the very regressive Social Security payroll tax has risen even higher than the benefits it is intended to finance, what justification can there be for cutting those benefits?

One justification rests on "fairness": current retirees get much more out of the system than they put in. The other rests on pragmatism: that's where the money is. Cutting benefits by only a couple of billion dollars a year will add up to massive savings. Reducing cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) could save up to $90 billion annually by the year 2000, according to *On Borrowed Time* (1988) by Peter Peterson and Neil Howe.

The authors admit that COLA cuts are regressive, and concede that "a permanent switch to a 'CPI-2' COLA would cut real benefit levels by 18 percent after ten years of retirement, and by 33 percent after twenty years of retirement—a penalty that would hit the 'old elderly' hardest." And any permanent cut in benefits, of course, would adversely affect today's younger workers when they retire. Social Security's critics argue that future benefits for retirees will already be far lower than they should be in proportion to the amount of "contributions" exacted through the payroll tax. Should future retirees be required to accept a still lower standard of living in order to alleviate the deficit?

None of this is meant to suggest that Social Security is just fine as it is. Unfunded liabilities in the trillions loom for the middle of the next century. But, most assuredly, none of the money saved *now* by cutting benefits or raising taxes will go to meet those liabilities. Instead, it will be used, as it is today, to pay the government's other bills, leaving the taxpayers and retirees of the future not one penny better off.

An important question is not whether these programs are good or bad, but rather whether *any* federal expenditures (other than interest on the debt) ought to be funded outside normal appropriations. Our peculiarly American separation of authorizing and appropriating was not laid down by the Founders; it didn't become a regular feature of our legislative branch until shortly after the Civil War, when Congress created Appropriations Committees as a bulwark against fiscal profligacy. The world's other democracies authorize and appropriate in a single legislative step, so the fact that we do so for an ever-larger share of our total national spending doesn't necessarily portend a descent into tyranny.

Subjecting such programs as food stamps or Supplementary Security Income (SSI) or farm price supports to the appropriations process offers no guarantee that they'll become less costly. That depends more on presidential leadership and congressional ideology. And just as appropriations can be raised or lowered, underlying authorizations for "automatic" entitlement spending can be changed. This is exactly what was done by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, one of

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President Reagan's most spectacular legislative victories.

I'm not saying that everything in our domestic-spending scheme of things is perfect. But Social Security pays for itself and ought to be left alone until changes are designed specifically to meet the financing requirements of the next fifty years. Besides, Social Security and other entitlements incontestably enjoy the support of the American people. Every poll taken over the last two decades has shown overwhelming public support for the major elements of the welfare state. A Northwestern University survey conducted in the late 1980s found support levels for maintaining or increasing expenditures for *all* social programs, ranging between 97.5 percent for Medicare to 75.6 percent for the least popular, food stamps.

The current railing against entitlements and "out-of-control" budgets is badly misplaced. Changing from entitlement funding to annual appropriation will not lead to lower spending for any program that enjoys broad political support. If Congress should ever decide that we are spending too much money on, say, price supports, it could change the authorizations that produce that spending almost as easily as it could cut appropriations for, say, NASA. The reason it does not change them is that those programs have strong political backing.

So the responsible subcommittees and committees face tough decisions: On what basis can they keep SSI fully funded but cut AFDC, or vice versa? I hope no one imagines these decisions would be based on careful policy analyses. Most members will make their budget decisions on the basis of factors such as interest group pressure or a desire to accommodate the leadership or other colleagues.

A few entitlement programs pay their own way; most don't, but when has that ever mattered to government? There is no balm in Gilead for our budgetary woes. Congress is in no mood to cut spending on popular domestic programs. But it is not very helpful to tar all entitlements with the same brush: taking the ax to so vast and inchoate a set of programs as "entitlements" makes no more sense than any other exercise in guilt by association. ❐

PRESSWATCH

Witch Doctor

by Terry Eastland

In case you've forgotten, it was a year ago last October that Anita Hill formally accused Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment. Of course, journalism did not forget, and its Hill-Thomas retrospectives and pieces on Hill's various commemorative activities showed it shamefully on her side.

I begin with Jill Abramson's front-page piece in the October 5 *Wall Street Journal*. Her lead: "Anita F. Hill was the loser in her battle with Clarence Thomas

a year ago. But as time passes, she is looking more and more like the winner." Oh? Abramson, the thrust of whose still-in-the-works book on the Hill-Thomas business was apparent, explained that Hill became "a catalyst for candidacies by women" (meaning Democratic women) who stood good chances of winning. The writer also found Hill's impact in the record number of sexual harassment charges filed this year with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. To bolster her conclusion she reported some "news"—the results of a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC poll of registered voters showing that 44 percent now believe Hill told the truth, while only 34 percent sided with Thomas. The same poll a year ago showed Thomas believed by 47 percent, Hill by 24. "A remarkable turnaround," Abramson called it.

Now, I have no doubt that Hill was a "catalyst" of liberal candidacies and also sexual harassment filings. But how can either justify saying she is "the winner" over Thomas? The fair conclusion is the narrow one of her catalytic, post-confirmation effects.

As for the *Journal*/NBC poll and others like it (*U.S. News & World Report* had similar numbers showing a "dramatic shift in public sentiment"), they were worthless. Let me explain: Clarence Thomas has been a Justice since last October. He reads and thinks about cases; he writes opinions. He doesn't give speeches or interviews about his work, much less his confirmation, and it would be unseemly if he did. President Bush and other leading Republicans were situated to defend Thomas and praise his addition to the Court, but, as Abramson quoted me saying, "The GOP, wrongly, has been unwilling to acknowledge the significant plus" of his appointment. Thus, as the *Washington Times* opined, "One and only one party to this controversy has continued to press its case [in public] this past year, and that is Miss Hill."

Terry Eastland is resident fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center and the author of Energy in the Executive: The Case for the Strong Presidency *(The Free Press).*

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She has done so shrewdly, with legions of help. Declining to discuss her charges of last October and never mentioning Clarence Thomas, she instead has focused on sexual harassment in general terms, picking her media spots and her speaking audiences; she has both a public relations consultant and a lecture agent. Hollywood producers (of "Murphy Brown," "The Trials of Rosie O'Neill," and "Designing Women") have celebrated her in their creations. The National Organization for Women and other feminist groups constantly harp on their agreement with Hill ("We Believe Anita Hill," say NOW T-shirts on one side, "One Year Later" on the other). Universities and law schools have held numerous symposia on sexual harassment, the subtext being that We Believe Anita.[1] Last August, the American Bar Association even gave her an award. (Don't expect Thomas ever to get one.)

All of this, bear in mind, occurred in an election year in which the Hill-inspired candidates and their helpers talked up sexual harassment and invoked the name of the Oklahoma law professor. Given a press that also believes Anita and whose coverage of all things Hill and Thomas was shaped by that belief—"Keep up the campaign to stop sexual harassment," editorialized *USA Today*—why shouldn't Hill's numbers be up and Thomas's down?

Abramson's piece mentioned some of these facts about the relative positions of Thomas and Hill vis-à-vis the public but failed to acknowledge the inherent unfairness of any year-later poll asking "Who do you think was telling the truth about Anita Hill's charges of sexual harassment by Clarence Thomas?" Instead, Abramson quoted a "poll expert" from the University of New Hampshire: "When people made their mind up at the time [October 1991] it was a snap decision. It was made on flimsy evidence. Those kind of views can be easily changed." Changed by the introduction of new and presumably non-flimsy evidence? Then show us some of this evidence.

The issue remains what Anita Hill alleged. Did she tell the truth? Did she lie? Was she crazy? Although the *Journal* had the time and resources to pursue this line of inquiry, Abramson noted simply that there have been "no substantive new disclosures about the truth of either her allegations or Justice Thomas's flat denial." Not true. For example, as readers of this magazine well know (see David Brock's March piece "The Real Anita Hill"), one of Hill's witnesses, Susan Hoerchner, told the Senate Judiciary Committee in a pre-testimony interview that in March 1981—six months before she ever met Clarence Thomas—Hill told her she had been sexually harassed.

Perhaps with this disclosure in mind, the *Journal* piece did acknowledge that questions have been raised about Hill's credibility; so, too, did *U.S. News & World Report*, which misleadingly titled its piece "Hill vs. Thomas: The Untold Story" (nothing new in this "untold story"). CBS and NBC, on the other hand, broadcast retrospectives that suppressed any such questions. NBC, moreover, had the chance to grill Anita Hill, as she consented to an interview. But the smart Hill had picked her network, and perhaps also her interviewer. Katie Couric asked:

> "You talked, Anita [Anita!], about some of the very supportive letters you've gotten, and some of the letters that have touched you. Have you received any hate mail? . . .
>
> "They find you offensive, most of all because you are a black woman? . . .
>
> "Twenty years from now, fifty years from now, when people look back at these hearings, how do you want them to think of you?"

Neither Couric nor any other journalist granted time with Hill has asked such obvious questions as: "Professor Hill, you told the Senate Judiciary Committee you had nothing to gain from your testimony last fall. But your speeches command fees as high as $11,000 and you actually have a lecture agency—the Leigh Bureau in Princeton, New Jersey. And contrary to what you told the Senate, you are now writing a book.

[1]Earlier this year the *Southern California Law Review* published twenty-five articles on the Thomas hearings. No writer supported his confirmation. Evidently in search of balance, the editors said that one of Anita Hill's lawyers would contribute a piece to a later issue titled "The People v. Anita Hill."

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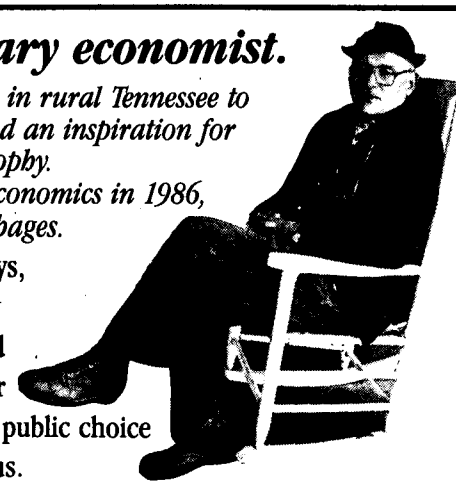

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How much was your advance? Didn't you have something to gain from testifying against Clarence Thomas?"

Meanwhile, those who might have been brazen enough to ask such questions during a radio or television retrospective have not been given equal time—or, in some cases, any time. "Larry King Live" in effect allowed Sen. Paul Simon the right to determine that show's guest: David Brock had been approached about being on the show, but Simon said that he would not be paired with the investigative journalist, and so he was not; appearing instead was a former aide to John Sununu, Ed Rogers, who did a pathetic job. At least "Larry King Live" had the pretense of two sides. NBC's "Today Show" had on a solid phalanx of pro-Hill types—no Thomas supporters allowed.

My favorite Hill story was filed by Felicity Barringer of the *New York Times*, a report on the professor's October 15 appearance at the Georgetown University Law Center. October 15 was the first anniversary of Thomas's confirmation by the Senate. Hill chose that day to set up—she was an organizer—a conference at the law school on "Race, Gender, and Power in America." Having referred in the first several paragraphs to Ms. Hill or Professor Hill, as per the newspaper's style, Barringer, moving to a discussion of the professor's speaking style, suddenly called her Dr. Hill.

Now, Ph.Ds are sometimes referred to by the press as Dr. So-and-so, but J.D.s are never doctored. Why the Dr. Hill at this point in the story? Read on. "Dr. Hill," the rest of the sentence went, "gave her retrospective view of the hearings in the arcane language of the academic doctrines currently fashionable in legal and literary criticism." Barringer evidently did not want to quote Hill before letting readers know this was *Dr.* Hill; otherwise the quote would look, well, strange: "Because I and my reality did not comport with what they accepted as their reality," Hill said, "I and my reality had to be reconstructed by the Senate committee members with assistance from the press and others."

Other accounts of Hill's Georgetown speech left out this remarkable business of "I and my reality." Perhaps next October Katie Couric can ask Anita—er, Dr. Hill—what she meant. ❐

RUSSIAN PRESSWATCH

Dead Meat

by Cathy Young

Moscow

How quickly your world changes after a few days in Moscow. Suddenly, the American presidential campaign, which interests very few people here—and for various obscure reasons, they seem to like Bush—is on the periphery. Instead, you find yourself preoccupied with privatization vouchers, the Communist party trial, soaring prices, the war in Georgia.

Your confusion is compounded each time you turn on the news and see tanks in the streets, helicopters, anti-aircraft guns, rockets, and young men running around with machine guns and other young men carried away on stretchers. This is all happening not in faraway Latin America or Yugoslavia, but in places familiar to many in the audience—cities like Gagry or Sukhumi, once-blooming resort towns where "middle-class" Muscovites would spend summer vacation.

Pavel Felgengauer, a political and military affairs reporter for the *Independent Gazette*, suggests that the nearby horrors might have one salutary effect: anything that scares Russian viewers out of their wits might deter them from rash actions that could lead to ethnic and civil warfare.

Closer to home, the "trial of the century"—the Communist party's suit to have Yeltsin's ban on its activities overturned by the Constitutional Court (even though no one knows exactly what constitution its rulings are supposed to be based on, since no new one has been adopted since Brezhnev's 1977 revision)—has entered a lively phase. Few Russians, other than the small group of loonies demonstrating in front of the Lenin Museum, seem to care about the fate of the late CPSU; its former functionaries, with few exceptions, care least of all, having moved to cushy jobs in private firms and joint ventures.

Most people can't even figure out what is being contested. Ostensibly, the anti-Communist side wants to prove that the CPSU arrogated to itself supreme powers over the state and the economy, but then it shifts focus and says the party's real crime was to abuse those powers to the detriment of the people. Whatever the accusations, they are all old hat.

It took the Gorbachev flap to revive interest in the case. In late September, subpoenaed as a witness, the former Soviet president refused to appear in court. Gorbachev's foreign passport, as has been widely reported, was cancelled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the request of the Constitutional Court until he complies with the subpoena. The "democrats," of course, despise Gorbachev for trying to save the Soviet empire while the Communists hate him for wrecking it. To most, his refusal to testify is yet another manifestation of arrogance.

Gorbachev claims he is being scapegoated, and may have a point. Consider the *Independent Gazette*'s recent interview with Leonid Kravchenko, who as chief of the Soviet State Broadcasting Company presided over the 1991 effort to roll back glasnost in broadcasting. Kravchenko, whose first move at Soviet broadcasting was to pronounce that he was first and foremost a loyal servant to President Gorbachev, now says that he

Cathy Young, our regular Russian Presswatch columnist, is the author of Growing Up in Moscow *(Ticknor & Fields).*

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never took any steps to curb the media on his own will: Gorby made him do it. Publications that once obligingly airbrushed the famous birthmarks out of Gorbachev's photos now miss no opportunity to kick the man. On the other hand, ex-Soviets can be forgiven for gloating when the former General Secretary of the Communist party becomes, as the Moscow daily *Kuranty* put it, *neviyezdnoy*, forbidden to travel outside Soviet borders.

A legal affairs commentator for Radio Russia introduced a discordant note into the general *Schadenfreude*, observing that from the perspective of what Russian liberals call *pravovoye gosudarstvo* (translatable as "a rule-of-law-state"), Gorbachev's tribulations were suspect. First of all, the CPSU trial is not a criminal case, merely a hearing on the constitutionality of Yeltsin's decrees, and it is therefore unclear whether Gorbachev can be compelled to appear as a witness. Second, the Foreign Ministry answers only to the government not to the Constitutional Court, so by what authority did the judges obtain the passport cancellation?

The commentator may have been on to something, though in Russia's current political and judicial disarray it's hard to tell. In any event, the humiliated ex-president, barred from taking a scheduled trip to South Korea, reiterated his refusal to take part in a "politicized trial" and thus invited further retribution, in the form of a 100-ruble fine. The amount of the fine for defying the orders of the Constitutional Court was established a year ago, when 100 rubles actually meant something; today, it won't even buy you a kilo of butter.

Unbowed, the ex-president soon faced a new atrocity: on October 7, a Yeltsin decree deceptively entitled "Measures to Support the Training of Personnel for the Banking and Financial System" deprived Gorbachev's foundation (set up after his ouster) of the properties it had been allotted by an earlier government decree. These properties were transferred to the newly created Financial Academy of the Russian Government, from which the ill-fated foundation can still lease no more than 9,000 square feet—compared to the 31,000 it used to occupy. On October 8, Russian TV viewers were entertained by an angry, media-mobbed Gorbachev brandishing a fist on the steps of the foundation's main building: the police had prevented him and his staff from entering.

Persistent refusal to comply with Constitutional Court orders is apparently punishable by up to six-months imprisonment. The weekly *Stolitsa* now speculates that Gorbachev's reluctance to testify stems from his fear of losing popularity in the West if his complicity in the party's dirty deeds is revealed—and that he may be gearing up to emigrate.

Other subpoenaed witnesses were more cooperative, perhaps because they had no international reputation to defend. Top Communists such as Gorbachev's former prime minister Nikolai Ryzhkov, reactionary bogeyman Yegor Ligachev, former head of the anti-reform (republic-level) Russian Communist party Ivan Polozkov, and the CPSU's last ideology chief Alexander Dzasokhov took the stand one by one—a remarkably charmless procession of men who'd helped run an empire.

They managed to sound reasonably articulate when questioned by the lawyer for the Communist side—at least to the extent that they could repeat all the old phrases about the great achievements of the Soviet people under the party's leadership, and maintain with a straight face that the CPSU was nothing more than a political party with no undue influence over the government or the economy. When confronted by opposing lawyers with documented facts of the Politburo's role in ratifying government decisions, approving visits by foreign delegations, and selling the country's gold (even after Article 6, which codified the CPSU's status as a "leading and guiding" force in Soviet society, was dropped from the USSR constitution), they could find nothing better to say than "Well, that was just our traditional way of doing things."

When asked about the decision to suppress news of the Chernobyl disaster, Ryzhkov reared up: "Don't you try to use Chernobyl against me. It's something I feel very deeply about." Moments later, solid evidence was presented that his government had knowingly allowed contaminated meat to be sold to the population, with no greater safety measures than washing off the carcasses. ❐

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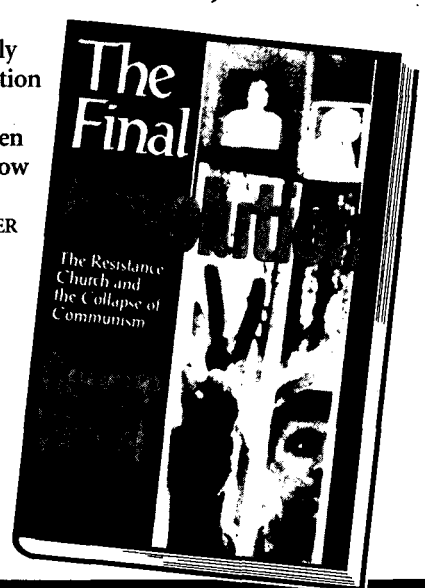

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Heroes of Our Time

by James Bowman

Probably the only people in the world who loved it when Sinead O'Connor tore up a photograph of the Pope on "Saturday Night Live" were a few florid-faced, bowler-hatted sots in the back rows of Orange Lodges in Belfast and me. This is not because I am such a very bad Catholic but because her gesture was a perfect example of the way in which the Hollywood mind works.

As Michael Medved says in his new book *Hollywood vs. America: Popular Culture and the War on Traditional Values*[1]:

> The old struggle between art and commerce has tilted decisively in the direction of art as the movie business takes itself more seriously with each passing year; today, even the heads of major studios assert that making significant statements—not crafting entertainment—is the essence of what they do.

It's enough to make a cat laugh, this pretension to intellectual seriousness on the part of a bunch of people who regularly confuse images and gestures and bogus professions of compassion with thought. That's why I found it wonderfully appropriate when this no-talent baldie with even less inside her head than on top of it tried to form her infant lips into a protest against—what was it? child abuse, I think—by blaming it all on the Pope.

Sam Goldwyn used to say, if you want to send a message, go see Western Union. Nowadays popular culture is shot through with messages, most of them worthless even as morality or politics, let alone as art. You can even have a message, like Miss O'Connor's tuneless ditty, from which all possibility of entertainment has been purged, so long as it is passionate and sincere enough.

Her badge of authenticity in Hollywood is that, like most of the other rich people there, she claims to have suffered at the hands of some authority figure. But she also gets bonus points because, as an Irish colleen and thus one of the world's few bona fide white oppressees, she can claim the Pope (or the Queen, if the mood strikes her) as her nemesis instead of having to make do with George Bush and Ronald Reagan like everyone else.

Michael Medved's book goes some way toward explaining where Hollywood's self-importance and moral earnestness come from, and I want to return to what is right and wrong with his explanation in a moment. But first let us look at a couple of recent pictures that illustrate Hollywood's transformation into America's biggest Western Union office.

Stephen Frears's film, *Hero*, has several messages. The three most important are:

(1) Everybody's a hero if you can catch him at the right moment.

(2) Don't believe what you see on television.

(3) We should all be nicer to one another.

If that sounds to you like serious thought, you'd better stop reading now before your brain overheats. Number one is an illustration of Medved's point that Hollywood loves to trash heroes: if everybody's a hero then nobody is one. It doesn't really matter that it was the petty thief, Bernie LaPlante (Dustin Hoffman), rather than the charismatic John Bubber (Andy Garcia) who pulled the survivors out of a crashed airplane. The hero business is all a charade, got up by the media, anyway—though some kind of putative hero to deliver Message No. 3 may be useful.

Here is where Western Union suddenly becomes very knowing and sophisticated. It is to the credit of the great image factories on the Pacific that they are occasionally willing to take on the fakery of images—on television if not in the movies themselves. Like *Network* a few years ago, *Hero* shows us unscrupulous and heartless image-makers willing to do anything to bump up the ratings. But it is really less self-criticism than self-congratulation for these *artistes* who sit atop the big Hollywood studios to look down with scorn upon the ratings-ridden television executives as if to say that *they* are too refined for such crass commercialism.

Moreover, such films represent the people as really pathetic dupes, deceived with ease into believing the most incredible nonsense. In *Hero*, the deception about the identity of the hero is as nothing compared to the preposterousness of the sheep-like following he obtains for proclaiming Message No. 3. This banality only goes to show how quickly the motorbikes of these highly refined and artistic messenger boys run out of gas. If, when you get to the payoff, that's all you've got left, you really ought to get out of the message business altogether.

The Public Eye, by Howard Franklin, is a bit more successful as a film. Joe Pesci plays a tabloid photographer called "The Great Bernzini" (or Bernzi) in New York in 1942 who is caught between the two halves of the artist's schizoid personality, between being a participant and an observer. Bernzi is at first so completely the observ-

[1]HarperCollins, 386 pages, $20.

James Bowman, The American Spectator*'s movie critic, is the American editor of the* Times Literary Supplement.

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er that there is almost nothing of the participant in life left in him. He doesn't take sides, he says, in the conflicts he records with his camera, but lives a monk-like existence in which nothing matters but getting the pictures. The only thing left of his common humanity is pride in his craft and a crush on Barbara Hershey, who plays a glamorous night-club owner in need of his help.

Miss Hershey's character, who also has artistic longings, is able to manipulate him into taking sides for once by flattering his vanity as an artist. As the sordid and gritty little entertainer who aspires to a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, Bernzi could be said to stand for Hollywood itself in its desire for intellectual respectability. Both he and the nightclub owner will do anything for it.

She sacrifices everything, including love, to keep her club—not because of a love for art but because of a love for the artists that gather there and allow her to bask in their reflected glory. He sacrifices everything, including decency and humanity, in order to get a picture of murder not just when the corpses are still warm—which is everyday stuff for him—but while it is actually happening. "I'm an artist," he says, "and I'm going to let people do what they're going to do; it's the only way they can do it right."

It's a good idea, but the ending spoils it. His photos of the murders break up a gang of black marketeers (led by a Republican, of course), turn Bernzi into a national hero, and give him his big break and, finally, recognition as an artist. Trust Hollywood to come up with the idea that being an artist, a hero, and a star are all really just the same thing!

But I am not all that happy with Michael Medved's conception of art either. He wants it to teach and "uplift" its audience. It is true that he claims he only wants the values of morality, family, and religion respected and not instilled and that he wants the popular culture to be less propagandistic rather than more. But the whole tone of his book and especially its last chapter suggests an enthusiasm for messages of a morally edifying sort not unlike that of the Hollywood producers who are fond of telling us that we should all be nicer to one another.

Nevertheless, he has written what is in many ways a good and a useful book. Especially impressive is his demolition of the argument that Hollywood produces offensive stuff only because the viewers want it; and I think he is right to identify an artistic *folie de grandeur* as the real reason. I know of no one else who has shown so conclusively that obscenity, indecency, and anti-family, anti-military, anti-religious messages are persisted in despite the fact that they are bad box office—though his analytical methods do not allow for a very clear idea about whether or not the same is true for pure violence.

What he does not do is go deeply enough into the connection between common perceptions of what "art" is and the offensiveness it gives rise to—what we might call the Sinead O'Connor factor. Medved is right to say that popular entertainers are simply copying the more traditional and highbrow arts in their plunge into sordidness, sex, and violence, but he is wrong, I believe, in thinking that, among the NEA types, "the most respected work of the moment aims to upset us rather than uplift us, and producing pain is considered a more meaningful achievement than providing pleasure."

In fact it is a widespread misconception that the sort of art which produces controversy when it is funded by the NEA is meant to upset and cause pain to its audience. On the contrary, it is meant to upset and cause pain to those who are *not* in its audience, to those who have no interest in looking at the kind of disgusting or blasphemous objects it trades in but who, like Medved, want to stop them from doing it. Such "artists" as Karen Finley or Shawn Eichman (she who made an *objet d'art* of the results of her own abortion) are really partisans, combatants in the culture wars. They have nothing to say to the likes of Medved or me but only to those who are already of their party—whom they do not shock but comfort and reassure.

For those who watch such stuff do so not because it is intrinsically interesting to them but in order to give a boost to their almost incredible self-righteousness, according to which they are being positively heroic in supporting their local artist against Jesse Helms or George Bush or the Pope or God—or Medved—who are supposed to object to what they do. Increasingly this kind of partisanship is to be found even among non-subsidized artists, such as Sinead O'Connor, who you would think would need a wider audience than the little band of the smug. How does this "bias for the bizarre," as Medved calls it, among the highbrows transmit itself to the lowliest of popular entertainers?

We might take a hint from *The Public Eye*. For what art does is to select and focus on the significant, like a good photographer. A scandal like that in the film, for instance, requires not just seeing but seeing *into*—the ability to discern the reality underneath appearances. Now it is because of the tradition of high art in this century that everyone knows what that word "reality" means: it means corruption, sordidness, greed, crime, and violent death. That is also the assumption on which Bernzi makes his living. People buy newspapers to look at pictures of corpses because it gives them a buzz: this is the *real* world because it is so appalling. And what makes Bernzi into an artist is that he deals in images of the appalling and therefore real.

Well, that's what Hollywood thinks too. Its images of sex and violence, however crude, are taken over from that larger intellectual culture which has set the standards of

(continued on page 78)

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LETTERS, 1905-1965

Albert Schweitzer
edited by Hans Walter Bähr
translated by Joachim Neugroschel

Macmillan/420 pages/$35

reviewed by ALGIS VALIUNAS

Most men of comparable intellectual and artistic gifts would be appalled at the thought of living a life like Albert Schweitzer's. Saintly self-abnegation is a tough row to hoe, especially under an equatorial sun, and the pleasures of civilization are splendid and many. It is impossible to fault anyone for failing to choose such a course; thus the greater the honor that accrues to so hard a vocation, the brighter the nimbus that radiates from a life spent in the midst of suffering almost beyond imagining. One cannot be half-hearted about such a healing ministry. At the age of 30 Schweitzer wrote to the director of the Paris Mission Society, "Absorbed in my thoughts about Jesus, I have asked myself whether I could live without scholarship, without art, without the intellectual environment in which I now exist—and all my reflections have always ended with a joyous 'Yes.'" He applied himself to the study of medicine, in order to make himself more useful; he was already a philosopher, a teacher of theology, a preacher, one of the world's finest organists, and the author of a study of Bach that remains irreplaceable. The truly astonishing thing is how he managed to continue to develop the gifts that he was prepared to sacrifice. He remained a thinker and a musician. His powers came together in his life of service. To the Orféo Català Choir in Barcelona he wrote in 1913, "And while I am bandaging the abscesses, my ears can still hear the Bach mass coming from you, and I feel as if a few solemn words of this text were resounding in the midst of these wretched people, to whom good is being done in the name of Jesus: . . . *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini* [Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord]. . . ."

To Lambarene on the Ogowe River in French Equatorial Africa (later Gabon), he came and built a hospital. The sick arrived from one hundred fifty miles away, by canoe. "At the end of the day you are amazed that you are still on your feet after all the misery you have seen." Leprosy, elephantiasis, scabies, sleeping sickness, heart disease, pneumonia, gangrene, malaria: the most fearful illnesses were common as a cold. When he was just getting started, he had to work in a windowless chicken coop, and wore his pith helmet indoors because the sun came blasting through the holes in the ceiling.

The hard life took its toll: ". . . you cannot imagine the physical fatigue one feels after almost three and a half years under the equator." His wife, Helen, her health broken, had to return to Europe, and spent much of the rest of her life in sanatoriums. "If it weren't for the thought of all the good one can do, then this life in Africa would be unendurable," he wrote after thirteen years as a missionary. He was to remain almost forty more.

"My only relaxation is practicing on the organ." It was actually a piano with organ pedals that he played on most every evening. Kept in a zinc-lined crate, to guard against the humidity, the pedal piano rolled out on rails. He never ceased to work on his beloved Bach. "Campaigned against superficial virtuosity and for a spiritualized playing," he wrote of his European career. "Anyone who deals with organs is transported beyond all that is human and all-too-human and purified to feel the sheer delight in truth, and he venerates organs and the sound of organs as the great spiritual educators that teach us to experience a conviction of eternity." When he was interned by the French during the First World War, he drew an organ keyboard on a table top and pedals on the floor, and practiced thus. He corresponded with organ builders and restorers. Every few years he would go to Europe and play a concert tour, with the proceeds benefiting the hospital. As a performing musician he felt himself in the service of the composer and of God: "Bach is a precious gift to our time, one of the lights that shine through the darkness in which mankind today must seek the road to a deeper spirituality."

The deeper spirituality he sought found theoretical utterance as well as practical use. The reverence for life (*Ehrfurcht von dem Leben*) is the center of his thought and feeling:

> Oh, what confusion was caused by the poet when he sententiously said, "Life is not the supreme good." I can apply this aphorism to myself, but I cannot apply it to someone else's life, for his life is precisely the one thing through which I relate to him. I must regard his life as his supreme good.

He sees that he cannot consider his own life the supreme good, for to do so would lead him to nihilism, in which nothing but his life would have value or meaning. So it is only the lives of others that he considers of supreme value, and in thinking thus he evades the problematic Christian principle that a man's soul, not his life, is the greatest good.

"The ethics of reverence for life is nothing but Jesus' great commandment to love—a commandment that is reached by thinking; religion and thinking meet in the mysticism of belonging to God through love." For Schweitzer, the love God commands is the love of the living body, which houses the soul. It is a great doctor's compassion that underlies the reverence for life: a democratic virtue,

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perhaps, as much as a Christian one. Unlike Tolstoy in his high Christly days, Schweitzer does not think it the duty of decent men to lie down and die in the face of those irreverent toward life. He is grateful, after the Second World War, that he was not among those doing the killing, but he acknowledges the war was necessary: "We simply cannot fathom the fact that our calling is to help compassionately while others are condemned to suffer or have to perform an activity that causes suffering and death." In the same letter, a circular to friends and patrons of the hospital, he quotes Lao-Tse at length on the proper attitude toward victory in war: winning must be no pleasure, for such pleasure would be a murderer's, and the killing of many should be mourned tearfully, so that the victor in celebration must behave as if at a memorial service.

Although Schweitzer extends his reverence for life beyond the human, he is not doctrinaire about animal rights.

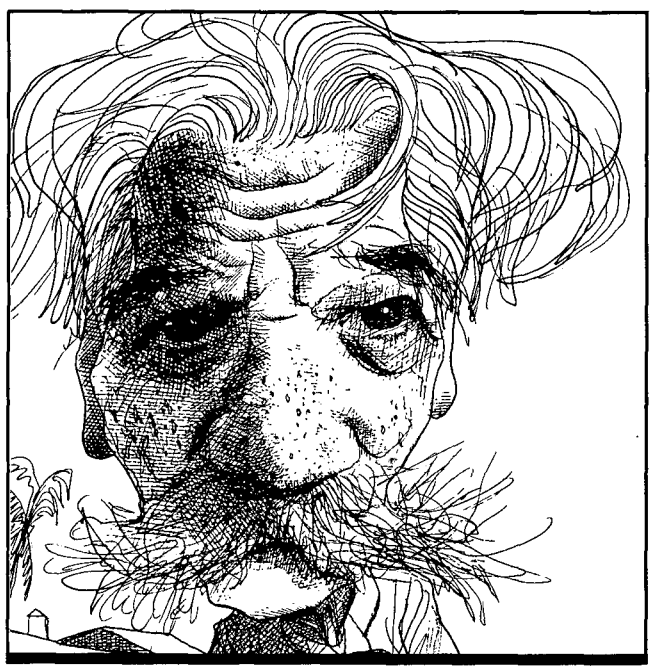
> I have just killed a mosquito that was buzzing around me in the lamplight. In Europe I wouldn't kill it even if it were bothering me, but here, where mosquitos spread the most dangerous form of malaria, I take the liberty of killing them, although I don't like doing it. The important thing is for all of us to properly mull over the question of when damaging and killing are permissible.

Clearly Schweitzer is more subtle in his thinking than the animal rights gang that equates animal life with human because animals are capable of feeling pleasure and pain just as human beings are. It is precisely because he is fully aware of what human beings are—not pleasure-pain mechanisms but creatures with souls—that he reveres their lives more than he does those of lesser beings. "The proposition that every life is sacred is absolute," but some lives are more sacred than others.

Schweitzer is careful that reverence for life not be dragooned into political service. To an American missionary he writes, "My idea of reverence for life is not meant to guide the African in striving for his own and his nation's freedom." It is meant to serve a higher level of freedom: that of each soul among billions, each soul conscious of the reverence it owes the others. "The Kingdom of God is great politics; the politics of personal and national freedom is the politics of the world. The latter politics may be justified, but it must not preoccupy our minds to the exclusion of all else."

The politics of this world was defined after the Second World War by the atomic balance of terror. In a letter to a Swedish newspaper in 1952, Schweitzer sets himself against modern political life, and for the life of the spirit:

> Through Christianity, the idea of a kingdom of peace has been known to mankind for centuries. People did not believe they could make it come true. It was viewed as something purely religious that could not be applied to reality, but actually it *is* something that should and must be realized.
>
> This insight is urged upon us by the times in which we live. If mankind is not to perish, then we have no choice but to place our hope in the spirit, which is different from the spirit of the world.



To Pablo Casals, Schweitzer asserts that atomic weapons are illegal by international law, because they have "an unlimitable effect," and "cause unlimited damage to people outside the battle zone." He is hopeful that this argument will have a salutary effect on the political spirit of the age, which he considers positively inhuman. Despite his naïveté, he was too great a man to be dismissed as a crank. John Kennedy replied to a letter of his in 1962 that he hoped Schweitzer would hurl "the great weight of [his] influence behind the movement for general and complete disarmament." It is ironic that the greatest easing of atomic tension was in fact accomplished by increasing armament rather than by Christian sentiment. The kingdom of peace remains, sadly, a chimera.

Whatever the flaws in Schweitzer's thinking, as a man of action he was solid as granite. "I can see myself only as a servant who therefore tries even more loyally to make the most of the talents entrusted to him." In 1951 he accepted the Hebel Prize but refused the honorarium that went with it, for there was too much suffering in Germany, especially among refugees, for him to take the money. "I ought to be thirty and not seventy years old," he declared, but he seemed always to work as though he were a young man. He oversaw the efforts of a work-crew of lepers, who refused to answer to anyone but him. He complained that his life was one hard job after another, but he never skirted the task. He expanded his hospital to "a large village," with forty buildings and 560 beds.

The simple core of his spirituality was always a beautiful thing. He was proud that, in the village of Gunsbach where he had grown up, Protestants and Catholics had shared the same church. He eulogized the explorer Pierre Count Sovorgnan de Brazza as a "new kind of colonizer" who "instantly launched the struggle for the abolition of slavery." Correcting a Finnish journalist who claimed that Schweitzer had denigrated the role of Christianity in Africa, he replied, "The Gospel has been a great spiritual boon for the natives. It has liberated them from the dreadful concepts of the heathen life they used to lead. It has freed them from the fear of magic and cruelty that the witch doctors practice! And it has brought them Jesus and the faith in the kind Father in heaven." He

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offered instruction to a French Catholic boy scout whose troop was named after Schweitzer:

> Don't choose to make your life into something great. Make your life good and true. Maintain your simplicity. Stick to the idea of always doing whatever is consistent with the spirit of children of God. I don't see why your goal should disappear as you grow older. Staying young doesn't mean having the soul of a child, it means having the soul of a child of God, the soul of a man trying to be a child of God, animated by the spirit of God. Seek simplicity.

And he wrote to a handicapped woman, "Do not quarrel with God, do not quarrel with man; leave all incomprehensible things alone, seek only one thing: the growth of the spiritual person, so that you may achieve peace of mind, which is higher than all reason, and so that you may give people something of the spirit of peace."

This admirable collection of letters is a rich spiritual document of a life that few would envy but many would revere. True goodness is more mysterious these days than evil, and this book teaches one to honor that mystery. ❐

BRIGHTNESS FALLS

Jay McInerney

Alfred A. Knopf / 416 pages / $23

reviewed by RICHARD LAMB

Russell and Corinne Calloway are standing in the kitchen of their Upper East Side apartment. It is her thirty-first birthday. "You're still my blonde bombshell," says Russell. "A mere shell of my former bomb," she retorts. The kitchen, it appears, is "not really intended for serious employment, but rather, it seemed, for the three-a.m. scrambling of a few Eggs Benny Goodman after the Stork Club." She is lemoning the sole filets. He has asked her what she thinks of the Condrieu. It is the opening of *Brightness Falls*, © 1992 by Bright Lights, Big City, Inc.

Corinne was "an erotic totem figure" at Brown; "socially acute observers could read in [her] manner the secret code of American pedigree." Russell, known as Crash, is a "Calloway from County Cork," by way of Boston and Detroit. If McInerney had remembered *The Third Man*—in which a testy British military policeman reminds Joseph Cotten, "Calloway, not Callahan, I'm English, not Irish"—he might have avoided giving an ethnically Irish character an ethnically English name. And yet the name is perfect. Just couldn't be better. Russell's father was a GM exec and Russell grew up a comfortable suburbanite, if without the cachet that a bunch of nasty, selfish, uptight, disapproving, miserly, Philistine, alcoholic, smug—but, thank god, eccentric—New England relatives bestows.

Corinne is searching a bit; it goes along with those relatives. She has tried law school, Sotheby's, and banking; volunteers at a homeless shelter; and really wants to teach. Russell has forsaken writerly ambitions for the security of the publishing house Corbin, Dern, where he made a name for himself by discovering his best friend, Jeff Pierce. Pierce has written a book of short stories about his eccentric Old New England Family. (McInerney himself was "discovered" by his old Williams friend Gary Fisketjon. There are extensive *à clef* elements here.) Jeff and Russell see each other as alter egos, Jeff walking on the wild side, Russell nabbing the girl and the safe job.

Russell is the protégé of editor Harold Stone, but is being rusticated. His books are too literary or too political. Then he walks in on Stone *in flagrante delicto* with his editorial assistant—character No. 43 from an Old New England Family. Now he's really screwed. His boss won't chat at the urinal. Russell isn't a careerist or anything, but it is 1987, and his career is going nowhere. What to do. Well. . . . He susses the fact that the company owns its building, has a textbook subsidiary, and—"like Exxon"—is undervalued. There's only one way out: a hostile takeover.

Russell hooks up with an LBO shark named Bernie Melman, who orchestrates the takeover. As the deal takes shape, Russell Calloway's personal life falls apart. Corinne doesn't want to do the publishing tycoon thing. She's happy with their lives. As Russell is drawn further into it they become more and more distant. Her recurrent bulimia flares up. She loses a baby. They stop having sex.

Russell pushes away his best friend, too, keeping his scheme a secret. But by this time Jeff is more interested in dope than friendship. Russell catches him shooting up in the bathroom at a party, and with family and friends stages an "intervention," packing Jeff off to a little place in Connecticut that used to specialize in Park Avenue drunks, but has broadened its horizons.

Russell goes to the Frankfurt Book Fair and commits drunken adultery. Corinne finds out and stalks off to Stockbridge and Mom. Russell's unholy alliance with Melman the Conqueror appears to be working until October 1987, when the buzzbomb Dow kicked out and a lot of people in yellow ties found themselves in a free-fall, an ungentle glide that would scatter a privi-

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leged fragment of a generation over the landscape. What fun.

Jeff dies of AIDS. Russell and Corinne get back together: "sympathetic *haute bourgeois* characters who clench in a reconciliatory embrace," as McInerney himself once sneeringly remarked of the type of ending readers seem to want. You got it.

McInerney has been the recipient of plenty of jealous rage, much of it from people whose gut tightens at the very mention of the baby boomer/jobs/kids/good life thing. Panning a book because one doesn't like the characters is a contemptible, non-literary concern. But if you are going to spend some time with these people, you might as well know that they are fatuous, glib, silly, and to frost it all, romanticized in their prerogatives of alma mater, brand name, neighborhood, and noblesse. They have none of the heroic vulgarity of an unsympathetic character like Martin Amis's John Self. McInerney seems to have a chop-shop in his mind in which he knocks off the very coolest trait from each member of a vast acquaintanceship, creating customized Kandy-Kolored tangerine-flake streamline preppies with the very sleekest in lifestyles and cravings. I mean this more as observation than a criticism, but you've been warned. As Lady Pansy Lamb—no relation, I fear—said of *Brideshead Revisited*, "Nobody was brilliant, beautiful, rich, and the owner of a wonderful house, though some were one or the other." McInerney has a sweet tooth where characters are concerned.

McInerney is frequently taken to task for being a failed satirist. But satirists are, on a basic level, moralists, and McInerney is not primarily interested in morality. What seems like satire is actually an ironic, Saki-esque whimsy—a trophy wife's rumored sex change is an example. So is his irritating habit of contriving juxtapositions: homeless people at dinner parties; beached whales at Southampton; blue-haired widows at rehab centers. It can't be a surprise that McInerney has settled upon F. Scott Fitzgerald as his most congenial literary forbear. In a recent essay he observes that Fitzgerald is "a realist in method, if not in sensibility." The same can be applied to McInerney himself. His techniques are those of realism, yet the result is something else entirely. He is a romantic. (Those Eggs Benny Goodman. Thinking that the Racquet Club is pink. The Tangerine-Flake characters.) This is not satire, it is celebration. Ambivalent, sometimes ironic celebration, but celebration nonetheless.

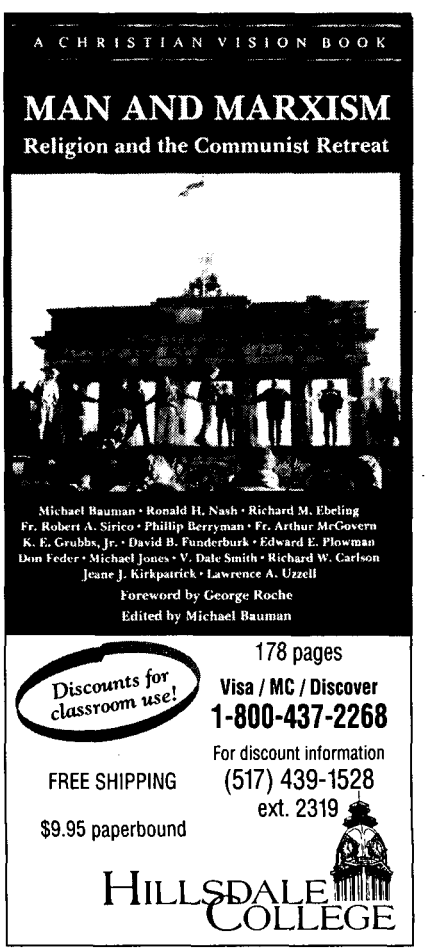
One reason some mistake McInerney for a satirist is the uneasy interaction of his archaic—classical, if you prefer—disposition and the times he chronicles. As he himself observes of Fitzgerald, McInerney is "a social historian, faithfully recording the passing moments of his own times, down to the names of fleetingly popular dances—a meticulous realism practiced at the service of his own romantic impulse to arrest the passage of time." It is his role as social historian that obscures his romanticism, for he lives, by his own description in "s--tty, depraved, and complacent times." It is the reflection of these times in his work—and other things such as a preoccupation with the club scene—that has caused McInerney to be lumped with Bret Easton Ellis and Amaretto saleswoman Tama Janowitz as a writer of "anomic bombs," to use Terrence Rafferty's words.

Yet, just as the protagonist of *Bright Lights, Big City* says, "You are not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning," Jay McInerney is not that kind of writer. To the extent that a glow of *anomie* pervades his work—and it doesn't, really—it is a reflection of the times he chronicles, and not an integral part of his vision. Fitzgerald, completely uninterested in modernism, was also lumped with writers he didn't resemble, or resembled only in subject matter.

McInerney doesn't have Fitzgerald's talent for ineffable metaphor, his almost unconscious symbolist tendencies ("yellow cocktail music") and in place of them he seems to indulge in a glibness reminiscent of Noël Coward ("shell of my former bomb"). But he has an undeniable efficiency and rightness of characterization. The pages that usher in lionized older novelist Victor Propp and financial heresiarch Bernie Melman are great.

Throughout, McInerney uses landmarks, legends, and random New Yorkiana to good advantage, taking us from the Racquet Club to the Russian Baths on Tenth Street, and manfully mentioning *Cats*. He is a master at taking a piece of information—for instance that Pat Buckley owns King Charles Spaniels—and dramatizing it, in this case in an encounter between Bernie Melman and an Upper East Side matron walking said dogs.

This is essentially an old-fashioned novel, in the tradition of Thackeray and Balzac. McInerney almost manages to have his cake and eat it too, playing a page-turning plot so that the reactions of characters to events are much more important than the events themselves. The second half of the book contains some fairly wonderful writing about loss. But the book's most telling moment comes when bought-out boss Harold Stone rages, "Can you believe what Calloway said to me this afternoon? He says, 'Nothing personal.' I told him, 'You better believe it's personal, you little c--ksucker. Before this is over I'm going to *personally* f--king demolish you." The callow ways of the Calloways are those of their generation, one in which stability and freedom, apathy and yearning, *sprezzatura* and ambition vie with each other. McInerney catches the antagonism consummately well. ❐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THE OREGON TRAIL and THE CONSPIRACY OF PONTIAC

Francis Parkman
edited by William R. Taylor

Library of America / 951 pages / $35

reviewed by WAYNE MICHAEL SARF

When a Potawatomi woman told me that a female relative had once helped boil and eat a white man's heart, I was struck more by her own bluntness than by her ancestor's grisly deed. Such frank revelations are rare these days, when we are told to damn Columbus, vaporize Custer's name from the field where he gave his life, and praise Kevin Costner's absurd parody of Sioux culture in *Dances With Wolves* (not to mention Russell Means's balding, five-o'clock-shadowed attempt to impersonate a full-blooded Indian in *The Last of the Mohicans*). The Library of America's one-volume edition of Francis Parkman's first two books thrusts us back toward an era when shyness about unnerving Indian customs was not a problem.

In *The Oregon Trail*, his account of an 1846 horseback odyssey from St. Louis to Wyoming's Fort Laramie, young Parkman flouts political correctness at every turn. Animal rights? Read how Parkman "dismounted, and amused [him]self with firing at the wolves." Peace-loving Sioux? "War is the breath of their nostrils." Rely on the natives' altruism? "Trust not an Indian. Let your rifle be ever in your hand. Wear next to your heart the old chivalric motto, 'Semper paratus.'" Passing on an anecdote of Sioux "thunder fighters" setting forth with guns, drums, and whistles, he fails to exhibit the proper New Age reverence:

> One afternoon, a heavy black cloud was coming up, and they repaired to the top of a hill, where they brought all their magic artillery into play against it. But the undaunted thunder, refusing to be frightened, kept moving straight onward, and darted out a bright flash which struck one of the party dead, as he was in the very act of shaking his long iron-pointed lance against it. The rest scattered and ran yelling in an ecstasy of superstitious terror back to their lodges.

Parkman's equally rude comments on non-Indians, from lowly emigrants to his "brutish" fellow travelers, display a snobbery scarcely to be borne in our paperback age. Mormons are "blind and desperate fanatics"; "squalid" Mexicans have "vile faces overgrown with hair." But if *The Oregon Trail* were merely a barrage of arcane prejudices, it would not have endured.

Parkman retains his appeal because he was *there*—riding with Indians, hunting buffalo—as his readers would like to have been. And we sense his pleasure. Carefully tending his firearms, he lets a hard-eyed romance mingle with pre-Darwinist musings, as when observing fish seemingly at play, yet actually engaged in "a cannibal warfare":

> "Soft-hearted philanthropists," thought I, "may sigh long for their peaceful millennium; for from minnows up to men, life is an incessant battle."

But Parkman not only welcomed "rude and stern scenes," he sought them out. Learning of warlike preparations among the Sioux, he shamelessly explains:

> I was greatly rejoiced to hear of it. I had come into the country almost exclusively with a view of observing the Indian character . . . I wished to satisfy myself with regard to the position of the Indians among the races of men; the vices and virtues that have sprung from their innate character and from their modes of life, their government, their superstitions, and their domestic situations. To accomplish my purpose it was necessary to live in the midst of them, and become, as it were, one of them.

Yet this is precisely what Parkman could or would not do—no matter how manfully he devoured the boiled puppy served by the "Dahcotah." His observations never penetrate the surface, and his Indians seem less men shaped by a particular culture than mere creatures of passion, with glittering eyes (a trait I have not noticed among the Indians of my acquaintance). But his descriptions of practices and preoccupations ring true, as when his host Kongra-Tonga tells of an enemy brave scalped alive:

> They then built a great fire, and cutting the tendons of their captive's wrists and feet, threw him in, and held him down with long poles until he was burnt to death. [Kongra-Tonga] garnished his story with a great many descriptive particulars much too revolting to mention. His features were remarkably mild and open, without the fierceness of expression common among these Indians; and as he detailed these devilish cruelties, he looked up into my face with the same air of earnest simplicity which a little child would wear in relating to its mother some anecdote of its youthful experience.

But of course. While the forthright Kongra-Tonga may have had his faults, one can be reasonably sure that he would never have protested against Atlanta Braves fans doing the "Tomahawk Chop."

In one alarming passage Parkman (shortly before informing us that he and his companion the Panther were "excellent friends") pauses to reflect that a "civilized white man," even when disposed to recognize their good qualities,

> must be conscious that an impassable gulf lies between him and his red brethren of the prairie. Nay, so alien to himself do they appear, that having breathed for a few months or a few weeks the air of this region, he begins to look upon them as a troublesome and dangerous species of wild beast, and if expedient, he could shoot them with as

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little compunction as they themselves would experience after performing the same office upon him.

It may seem odd that Bernard DeVoto, writing in 1943, should accuse the young weakling of admiring not merely the Indians' vigor and bravery, but their very cruelty. Yet certainly Parkman, like all good Americans, prefers warlike Indians, saved by the "powerful stimulus" of martial spirit "from lethargy and utter abasement." More timid red men, less warlike, had "little of humanity except the form; but the proud and ambitious Dahcotah warrior can sometimes boast of heroic virtues."

Living among these "wild democrats of the prairie," Parkman foresaw their corruption and knew that the frontier he was privileged to see would soon perish: "Its danger and its charm will have disappeared together." He had suffered greatly from illness that summer—"and yet to this hour I cannot recall those savage scenes and savage men without a strong desire again to visit them."

While Parkman viewed his frontier sojourn as helpful in understanding the eastern Indians of the colonial era, one suspects that his very observations were colored by previous historical readings. With *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851), he sought to "portray the American forest and the American Indian at the period when both received their final doom." His first historical work, it would ultimately serve as a sequel to his mighty series *France and England in North America*. And like those books, its introductory chapters on colonial rivalries portray the struggle for a continent in terms few historians today would endorse: "Feudalism stood arrayed against Democracy; Popery against Protestantism; the sword against the ploughshare."

But if Parkman's analysis no longer persuades, his narrative still compels. Here again, a horror of—and fascination with—barbarity is complemented by admiration for courage. He cannot mention the Iroquois' fondness for torture without adding that they possessed "bravery, generosity, and all the savage virtues"; nor can he bestow higher praise on a tortured Jesuit priest than by writing that he "died calmly as a martyr of the early church, or war-chief of the Mohawks." Alas, his superficial insight into Indian character (which he views as "hewed out of a rock," though seemingly malleable enough when absorbing white vices) mars even his portrait of "the savage hero of this dark forest tragedy. Praising Pontiac's eloquence and capacity for magnanimity, he must nevertheless remind us that "He was a thorough savage, with a wider range of intellect than those around him, but sharing all their passions and prejudices . . . His faults were the faults of his race, and they cannot eclipse his nobler qualities."

With the English triumph in the Seven Years' War, the Indians so carefully cultivated by the French found themselves subject to their old enemies. While the obtuse English produced extreme suffering by refusing to supply the usual "presents" to Indians now dependent on European trade goods, white settlement, fast extending to the Alleghenies, ate away the forest "like a spreading canker." An Iroquois sachem pronounced his people "penned up like Hoggs. There are forts all around us, and therefore we are apprehensive that Death is coming upon us." Frenchmen eager to drive rivals from the fur country told the Indians that while the King of France had "fallen asleep" and allowed the English to conquer Canada, he was now awake, and would provide troops to help expel them.

The breaking point came in 1763, when the Indians were informed that their French father, without asking his children's leave, had ceded their lands to the English. Soon "a plot was matured, such as was never, before or since, conceived or executed by a North American Indian." The English frontier forts were to be simultaneously captured and destroyed, and the settlements then laid waste. Pontiac, without whom the scheme might have ended in a few raids "and a little whooping and yelling under the walls of Fort Pitt," was then principal chief of the Ottawas and untitled head of their loose league with the Ojibwas and Potawatomis, his influence extending far beyond these tribes.

Pontiac's plan to take Detroit—with warriors sauntering into the fort with sawed-off muskets beneath their blankets—failed when the English proved forewarned. He then adopted the unusual expedient of an extended siege. Despite the odds, the tiny garrison of English and provincials held on for months—for "where barbarism has been arrayed against civilization, disorder against discipline, and ungoverned fury against considerate valor, such has seldom failed to be the result." Meanwhile, war-parties had broken out of the woods "like gangs of wolves" to lay waste the settlements. "Along the Western frontiers of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, terror reigned supreme . . . the settlers in the valley of the Mohawk, and even along the Hudson, were menaced with destruction."

The rebellion's success was temporary, of course, and Pontiac surrendered only to be murdered years later—tomahawked near St. Louis by an Illini warrior for an English trader's barrel of liquor. And thus "basely perished this champion of a ruined race." Conscious of the tragedy, but believing that "the doom must come," Parkman was more concerned with its inevitability than with white guilt—though inclined to the then-popular belief that the Indians would literally die out as a result of contact with civilization. Reading him today, we gain insight not merely into the history of the eighteenth century, but into the mentality of the nineteenth.

Americans not quite convinced that our eastern Indian wars actually took place may profitably read of how naked

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corpses, "gashed with knives and scorched with fire, floated down on the pure waters of the Detroit, whose fish came up to nibble at the clotted blood that clung to their ghastly faces." Other victims were eaten by the Indians, though Parkman assures us they were not "habitual cannibals." An old woman slashes open a corpse and quaffs its blood "with a ferocious ecstasy," and an English soldier writes of one mangled victim that "the Indians wip'd his Heart about the Faces of our Prisoners." The massacre of a teacher and his young pupils, standing out even in this "horrible monotony of blood and havoc," incurs the wrath of older warriors, who rebuke the killers with the ultimate charge of cowardice.

The fear planted by the threat of such horrors bore ugly fruit. One woman slew her own child lest its cries reveal her hiding place, while a contemporary notes how an express rider saw a freshly scalped woman lying in the road, "her Brains hanging over her Skull; his Companions made a Proposal to knock her on the head, to put an End to her Agony . . ." But he rode off.

Others were remarkably uncowed by the "terror of the tomahawk," their reasons ranging from raw courage to an inability to recognize their peril. Many Quakers, justly renowned for their kindness toward the Indians, initially acted as apologists in denying or downplaying accounts of the bloodletting (striking a strangely modern note for those familiar with liberation theology). But even they ultimately took defensive measures. And while many refugees remained paralyzed by fear, others found every faculty "absorbed by the burning thirst for vengeance, and mortal hatred against the whole Indian race."

Such "unquenchable and indiscriminate hatred" was, Parkman conceded, not easy for those "living in the tranquility of polished life" to understand. Some embraced a war of extermination; a dying frontiersman, giving his gun to a boy, urged: "Whenever you see an Indian, kill him with it, and then I shall be satisfied." Pennsylvania offered a bounty for scalps of "enemy" Indian males and females above the age of ten. One soldier, having deserted to the Indians years before, was pardoned when he returned with five scalps—including his wife's. (Parkman's moralistic index reference begins: "Owen, David, diabolically kills and scalps his own Indian wife and several of her relations . . .") Intent on "reducing the Indians to reason," General Amherst considered giving them smallpox-infected blankets, while another Briton predicted sadly that "instead of Colours and Cannon, our Trophies will be stinking scalps," in a war "conducted by a spirit of Murder . . ."

Whatever Parkman's flaws—his consistent misuse of "rifle" when muskets are meant, his suspiciously novelistic descriptions, and his prissy Victorian omissions on grounds of "good taste"—no one can accuse him of minimizing white beastliness, or the price exacted from the red men by Progress. Few "Indian" horrors can equal his account of how, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the infamous "Paxton boys" slaughtered fourteen peaceful Indians—whose long-buried bones, he tells us without comment, were ultimately disinterred "in preparing the foundation for a railroad." ❐

RUDE AWAKENINGS; WHAT THE HOMELESS CRISIS TELLS US

Richard W. White, Jr.

ICS Press / 333 pages / $24.95

reviewed by TERRY TEACHOUT

On May 22, 1989, the *New York Times* ran a front-page story with this uncharacteristically soft-spoken lead:

> Drug and alcohol abuse have emerged as a major reason for the homelessness of men, women and families, complicating the search for solutions, advocates for the homeless say. . . . Advocates like Robert M. Hayes say that they have shied away from discussing the problem of addiction in the past, in part because they feared that the public would lose its sympathy for the homeless. But "the bottom line," he said, "is that we have to tell the truth."

Had this story run in one of New York's tabloids, the headline might have read: HOMELESS SPOKESMAN: *I'M A LIAR*. For Hayes, founder of the National Coalition for the Homeless, had spent the better part of a decade lying about what he and every other homeless "advocate" knew—that most homeless people are, among other things, chronic substance abusers, and that their addictions are in large part responsible for the fact that they are homeless. But Hayes's belated confession has had little effect on media coverage, which is still dominated by two assumptions: (1) There are around three million homeless people in America, including many homeless nuclear families, and (2) most of them are just like you and me.

In *Rude Awakenings*, Richard White refutes these assumptions, and shatters other myths as well:

- The late Mitch Snyder, for years the best-known homeless advocate in America, admitted in 1984 that the widely accepted figure of three million homeless was a fiction: "We got on the phone, we made lots of calls, we talked to lots of people, and we said 'Okay, here are some numbers.' They have no meaning, no value." In fact, reliable estimates suggest that no more than 300,000 Americans are homeless at any given time.
- "Most of the homeless today, as in the past, are single adults, and . . . the typical homeless family is a never-married mother staying with her children in an inner-city homeless shelter."
- "Seven out of ten homeless adults

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across the country have been institutionalized at one time or another—in a mental hospital, detoxification center, jail five days or more, or prison. . . . Slightly more than 50 percent have spent some time in jail, 24 percent in prison."

These facts are universally known to—and acknowledged by—people who work with the homeless. "Housing is not the issue,'' one Los Angeles social worker told White. "Jobs isn't the issue. If you got one of these dudes a house, he wouldn't last in it any longer than four months."

The professional advocates' lies have actually worsened the lot of the unhappy men and women they seek to help. In the angry words of Boona Cheema, a disaffected member of the National Coalition for the Homeless who runs a large homeless program in Berkeley, California, "It's very difficult when the coalition paints the homeless as 'safe, sane, and sober' and the programs are overwhelmed with the opposite."

Richard White graduated from Berkeley in 1960 and spent the next quarter-century working in federal anti-poverty programs. "At Berkeley," he says, "I had been a political activist: a card-carrying member of the Socialist party of Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas, and Michael Harrington." But White, unlike his fellow activists, knew a fact when he saw one:

> I first noticed stories of "millions" of Americans without homes in the early months of Ronald Reagan's presidency, stories that often ascribed the problem to his policies. The effects of governmental action usually take longer than a few months to manifest themselves, so I was skeptical. . . . I had [already] developed strong reservations about the effectiveness of many government policies and programs for the poor. . . . I had come to suspect that many criticisms of such programs were on the mark—that most were not working, and that some were doing more harm than good.

These suspicions led White to examine homelessness in depth, conducting over a hundred interviews with "social service workers, program administrators, homeless individuals, journalists, policy analysts, professors, and others with first-hand observations." What he found was a conspiracy to deceive the American public. Robert Hayes used to say, "It is no exaggeration to say that there is a three-word solution to homelessness: housing, housing, housing." According to White, Hayes and his colleagues deliberately exaggerated and oversimplified the homelessness problem, which arose from a variety of destructive forces—notably the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill and the emergence of an urban underclass—and which was exacerbated by government policies that have "taken social responsibility away from families, cumulatively eroding their ability to fulfill society's most important task: nurturing children and raising them to be responsible adults."

Fearing that government-funded homeless programs would lose their legitimacy if the unpalatable truth were known, advocates like Hayes and Mitch Snyder chose, in White's trenchant phrase, to "lie for justice." The Hayes-Snyder line, endlessly parroted by the media, has become the conventional wisdom on homelessness. But most people believe, instinctively and by the evidence

of their own eyes, that the homeless are *not* like you and me, and have come to distrust all "solutions" to the homeless problem based on that patently false assumption. White outlines a more realistic way of addressing the problem, one bearing a strong family resemblance to the "new paradigm" approach to welfare policy for which the Bush White House has such mysterious disdain:

> We should structure our programs so that the "invisible hand" that has been so productive in generating economic wealth for us can work socially as well. Such programs should not simply let citizens sink or swim—we do not do that in the business sector, either—but instead help them to govern their own lives. Self-governance depends on the health of our natural institutions, those face-to-face arrangements that arise spontaneously out of our nature as social beings. . . . Taxes and other public policies need to be evaluated and revised to ensure that they reward work over the choice not to work, family over individual, neighborhood and community over mere propinquity.

Rude Awakenings is not the sort of pop policy book that Jonathan Cohen, writing recently in *Freedom Review*, correctly described as "self-actualization for the politically disaffected." There is nothing glossy about White's ideas, or the way he has packaged them, which is straightforward to the point of occasional naïveté: "I am not afraid to advance ideas that will cost money because I am confident that when we are reasonably certain that the ideas will work, we will spend the money, federal deficit or no." But White's central insight, while simple, is anything but naive: *Public policy advocates must tell the truth.* The problem with lying for justice is that people eventually stop believing you. Until homeless advocates start telling the truth, it is highly unlikely that any more "solutions" to the homeless problem requiring the expenditure of tax dollars will pass muster with the American people.

White views the homeless problem as emblematic of a deeper disorder: "America is a place where the pursuit of social injustice is serious and ongoing. As I see it, we may have more lying than we have injustice, and it is crippling our public life." Indeed it is. And much of what is generally reported and believed about such diverse issues as homelessness, poverty, AIDS, race relations, and the environment is simply the lengthened shadow of false statements made by well-meaning people. ❐

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SOUND AND FURY: THE WASHINGTON PUNDITOCRACY AND THE COLLAPSE OF AMERICAN POLITICS

Eric Alterman

HarperCollins / 352 pages / $23

reviewed by JOHN PODHORETZ

George Will is the root of all evil. "The McLaughlin Group" is a leading cause of racial tensions in the United States. Morton Kondracke has the blood of 100,000 slain Iraqi soldiers on his hands. Robert Bartley of the *Wall Street Journal* sold America to the Japanese. These are just a few of the gems to be mined between the covers of Eric Alterman's *Sound and Fury*.

Sound and Fury is yet another one of those books that tries to explain the conservatives' domination of the 1980s by ascribing it to sinister magicians whose hypnotic powers held the nation in thrall. Only this time the magicians are not Ronald Reagan and his diabolical image machine, but guys who write newspaper columns and appear on television. Alterman contends that almost all of the nation's difficulties "derive from a common foundation: the deadly combination of right-wing belligerence and intellectual irrelevance that dominates our political discourse." His definition of "political discourse": articles that appear on op-ed pages and the televised pronouncements of their authors when they appear on TV.

Alterman calls these men "the punditocracy," a term whose gracelessness typifies his clunky and labored prose. (For the record, Alterman describes my prose style as "atrocious" and "self-infatuated.") The punditocracy comprises George Will, Charles Krauthammer, A.M. Rosenthal, Robert Novak, Morton Kondracke, Fred Barnes, William Safire, and (the token liberal) Michael Kinsley. While using most of these men as target practice (he offers some words of praise for Safire and Kinsley), he also flatters them by wildly inflating their importance and glamorizing them beyond all recognition. Life is just one long party for the punditocracy, as they trip the light fandango with Reagan Administration officials and drink deep of Fame and Power at inaugural balls and exclusive Georgetown parties.

Alterman cannot quite decide if they have been corrupted by fame and power, or whether they have been granted these bounties because they are ideologically committed to conservative causes. Their ascent coincided with Reagan's, and Alterman is disgusted by what he believes is the punditocracy's indecent intimacy with Washington's powers-that-be. In a chapter about George Will that runs twenty-three pages but takes as long to read as the unabridged Milton, he breathlessly recounts Will's supposedly scandalous behavior toward Ronald Reagan in 1980, when he helped Reagan prepare for his debate with Jimmy Carter and later had the President-elect over to dinner.

The fact that Will kept himself at a philosophical arm's length from the Reagan White House, attacking it from the right for insufficient anti-Communism and from the left for insufficient taxation, is barely discussed here. The same is true of Will's *persona non grata* status in the Bush White House. It is understandable that Alterman makes so little of Will's intellectual independence from Reagan and Bush, since it would completely invalidate his rather tenuous polemic.

Alterman is on somewhat firmer ground when he attacks "The McLaughlin Group" for infantilizing the American political debate. But he fails to understand one simple little point: "The McLaughlin Group" is a TV show. Its purpose is primarily to entertain (the same is true of syndicated columns, by the way, which tend to be snappy and lively pieces; nobody would read them if they were written by the likes of, say, Eric Alterman). Instead, Alterman treats "The McLaughlin Group" as though it were a Platonic dialogue, and would probably seek the fate of Socrates for the likes of his book's *bête noire*, Fred Barnes. Here is how he describes the influence of the "Group" on America:

> When historians one day seek to understand how George Bush and Lee Atwater succeeded in making "liberalism" a dirty political word in 1988, they will need to look no further than the tapes of five upper-middle-class white guys sitting around a TV studio talking about how black families "are going to have to stop relying on government and politics to solve their problems."

One might have thought that the American electorate itself decided "liberalism" was a dirty word, and that George Bush and Lee Atwater merely uncovered this fact in time to make Michael Dukakis profoundly uncomfortable. That is, after all, what democracy is about—striking a common chord with voters, who then make you President.

But then, Alterman doesn't really go for all this democracy stuff: when writing about President Nixon's war with the media, he says dismissively, "Nixon was certain that he, not these self-selected Ivy League smarties, understood what the American people wanted from their president." Well, yes; Nixon had been elected by tens of millions of Americans and thus had some claim to representing them better than the nation's editorial pages—and especially the editorials of Alterman's favorite outlet, the *Nation*.

That the punditocracy agreed with Ronald Reagan on certain fundamental issues is impermissible in the World According to Alterman, for "alone within

John Podhoretz, a visiting fellow at the Hudson Institute, is writing a book on the Bush White House to be published next year by Simon & Schuster.

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that section of the media where our political discourse takes place, the pundits have the power and obligation to point to a naked emperor and observe that he has no clothes on." Note well the key word here: "obligation." Alterman believes the only honest political writing is for the purpose of exposing naked emperors. But what if the emperor is clothed and his critics are as denuded of wisdom and sense as Eric Alterman himself? His introduction, after all, praises the late I.F. Stone, friend to Communist dictatorships and possibly handmaiden to them as well.

Alterman writes about his opponents as though they have taken control of the political discussion in the United States. While it is certainly true that these men were the rising stars of Reagan-era journalism, they have been largely balanced (or canceled) out by the editorializing in our major newspapers that appears under the qualifying phrase "News Analysis." These bylined articles, which physically resemble news stories but are actually nakedly subjective, are given prominent placement on the front page, not somewhere near the back of the front section. They are the expressions of American conventional wisdom, and for the most part they do *little but* point to the emperor and declare him naked.

What really comes across in this book is its author's rage that some opinions with which he disagrees have managed to receive widespread attention. Unwilling to engage these ideas seriously, he instead resorts to petty assaults on the characters of the men who hold them, substituting rumor for fact with the small-mindedness and ugly dexterity of a campaign spokesman. ❐

OH CANADA! OH QUEBEC! REQUIEM FOR A DIVIDED COUNTRY

Mordecai Richler

Alfred A. Knopf /277 pages/$23

reviewed by BARRY COOPER

Canadians are prey to many myths, but the most important of them is that what makes us truly, uniquely, profoundly etc. Canadian is Quebec. Two peoples, working in two languages, together, building on the northern half of the continent a more tolerant, more caring, more just nation than the U.S. Without Quebec, sing the full-throated chorus of Canadian intellectuals, we would simply be poor, cold, rust-belt Americans with a deep appreciation of hockey.

When the novelist Mordecai Richler attacked many of the underpinnings of that myth in an article in the *New Yorker* in September 1991, it was greeted in Canada—and especially in Quebec—with a tumult of incoherent anger. Richler drew attention to two dirty little secrets: the repressive language laws of Quebec and its history of anti-Semitism. Last spring he published it all over again as *Oh Canada! Oh Quebec!*—with footnotes, a bibliography, and a host of new details that have only increased the rage and the incoherence of the response. To make matters worse, a week after it appeared in Canadian bookstores, it was the number-one bestseller in the country.

Richler is famous enough abroad that his words will carry weight at home, and, although his book doesn't aim to ridicule the government and politics of Quebec, it does the next best thing: it surveys with wit not unmixed with contempt, a long train of stupidities that have contributed to a world-class economic, political and constitutional crisis that may well require the partition of the country to resolve—civil war having been ruled out as "unthinkable."

October's "no" vote in a Canada-wide referendum on national unity only deepens the problem. Quebecois intellectuals and governments have over the years debated whether Quebec would be better off without Canada. But anyone who points out that virtually all of Canada's constitutional difficulties center on Quebec is indirectly raising another question: Wouldn't Canada be better off without Quebec?

Richler starts by describing Bill 178, a law that excludes any language but French from exterior commercial signs. Inside stores, English is allowed to appear but only if it is clearly subordinated to French. Detailed directives have been promulgated regulating, for example, the size of letters on signs. One rule states: "The color of the French and English lettering should be the same. If not, the color of the French should be stronger. The language inspector will decide what color is stronger." The assumption sustaining the Quebec sign law seems to be that French will be preserved and enhanced by suppressing English and those citizens who speak it. Likewise, one can argue that arson is really a form of urban renewal.

Contemporary ethnic nationalism is best understood by looking at the religious history of the province. A half-century ago French Quebec was Roman Catholic not only in its religious practices, but also in its social organization. The health, education and welfare bureaucracies, for example, were staffed and administered by priests, nuns, and lay brothers and sisters. It is only in the last generation and a half—which is to say with astonishing rapidity—that that entire apparatus has been secularized.

The most unsavory aspect of Church-dominated society in Quebec was the contempt it taught for non-French, non-Catholic citizens. The term *maudits anglais*, damned English, was understood literally. The powerful English-speaking Presbyterian businessmen of Montreal were indifferent to these curses, not least

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because they knew who controlled the wealth of the city—but poor Irish Catholics and even poorer Jews were not so strong. Richler was tasteless enough to remind the nationalists of their anti-Semitic heritage, a heritage of which they are properly ashamed. But since their nationalist pride is uncertain, their shameful past can be accommodated only by denying it ever existed. They have thus described Richler as filled with delirium and hysteria, resentment, racism, bad faith, contempt, morbid introspection, unresolved personal problems, and both hatred and self-hatred. One nationalist Member of Parliament urged that the book be banned under Section 319 of the Criminal Code as hate propaganda.

Richler cited public opinion surveys that indicated contemporary French Quebec was more anti-Jewish in its attitudes than English-speaking Canada. Rather than admit such a thing was possible the nationalists disputed the language of the survey questionnaire and noted correctly that there were even more anti-Semitic "incidents" among the "English." Look, they said, Toronto has more anti-Jewish vandalism than Montreal and in 1934, in Regina, Saskatchewan, two Jewish radiologists were excluded from a hospital. What does Richler say about that? Nothing!

Such bile might well alert ordinary readers to the existence of a real issue. No one among the Quebec nationalists wanted to consider Richler's argument: that there is an intelligible connection between the bigotry of a priest or the editorial position of a major Montreal newspaper during the 1930s, and the contemporary nationalism of the French population of the province. No one dares admit that the French are fighting against injustices that no longer exist, nor that they are committing real injustices against their English-speaking fellow-citizens, whose bilingual sons and daughters are leaving for more hospitable places in record numbers. Worst of all, no one even knows how to talk about the relationship of bigoted priests in the 1930s to bigoted intellectuals today. If Richler has ridiculed ridiculous laws, surely that is the only appropriate response of a concerned citizen in a democracy. Americans seeking a quick study of the painful recent history of their northern neighbor cannot do better than this splendid piece by Canada's best writer. ❐

A NATION OF VICTIMS: THE DECAY OF THE AMERICAN CHARACTER

Charles J. Sykes

St. Martin's Press /289 pages/$22.95

reviewed by JOHN R. DUNLAP

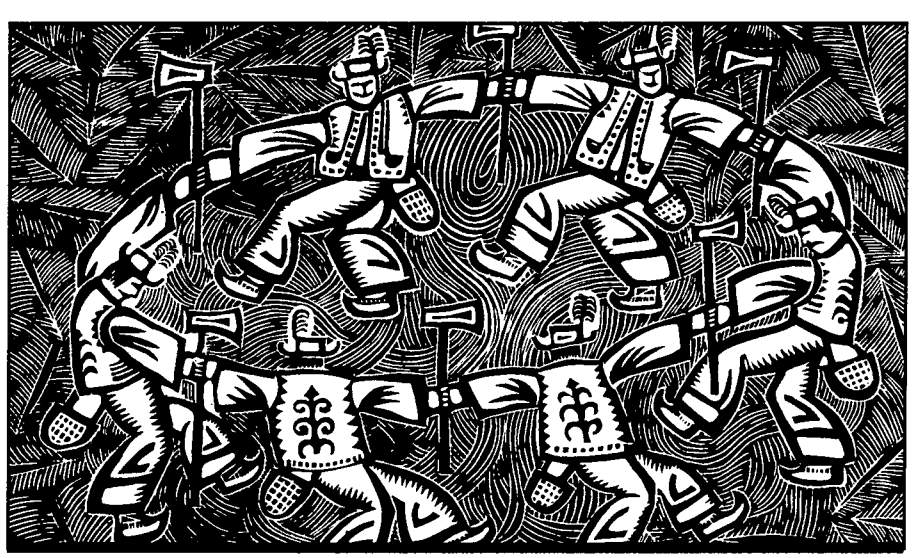
In its twentieth-anniversary issue (Fall 1985), the *Public Interest* printed an essay by James Q. Wilson on "The Rediscovery of Character: Private Virtue and Public Policy." The essay pointed to a hesitant change in the assumptions of policy analysts. Having bottomed out with calculable economic appraisals of public problems, some analysts were beginning to toy with the idea that such problems (welfare dependency, crime, family disruption, poor schooling, deficit spending) owe less to defective incentives than to frayed morals.

Wilson alluded to "the growing awareness" that many social troubles can be understood only "if they are seen as arising out of a defect in character formation." Seven years later, that growing awareness has matured into what Lawrence Mead calls a new "politics of conduct." Granted that rotten personal behavior does indeed create intolerable social trouble, debate centers on how to foster good conduct, with the left and the right both discomfited by the prospect of public efforts to improve personal morals; liberals get antsy about religious intrusion, conservatives about state paternalism.

In *A Nation of Victims*, Charles J. Sykes cuts across the ideological divide with his claim that we have become a society "unwilling to judge itself in terms of moral order." Be that as it may (and the claim seems to me overstated), Sykes offers compelling reasons to suppose that American culture is in a bad way. The keynote is "victimism," which Sykes defines as "a generalized impulse to deny personal responsibility and to obsess on the grievances of the insatiable self."

There are shortcomings in Sykes's exposition, not least being his occasional lapses into the jargon characteristic of the therapeutic culture he castigates. Nor should *A Nation of Victims* take any awards for exact editing and scholarly depth; the index is incomplete, some names are misspelled, and the notes are cluttered with secondary

John R. Dunlap teaches English at Santa Clara University.



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citing and garbled by misreferences.

For all that, *A Nation of Victims* draws together an extremely useful compendium of insights into the American character. If you've been following names like Philip Rieff, Christopher Lasch, James Coleman, James Q. Wilson, Allen Matusow, and Shelby Steele for the past several years, you'll know that the whistle has already been blown on the culture that has produced victimism—and you won't be surprised to find those names prominent in Sykes's notes.

The motto of victimism is "I DESERVE," and its national anthem is the Whine. Under its ministrations, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s degenerated into Black Power follies and *de facto* quotas; efforts to lend a helping hand to the downtrodden evolved into self-perpetuating bureaucracies doling out mandated entitlements to slackers and outright bums; honest movements to reform the legal system energized a generation of litigious buffoons with sophomoric excuses for the most vicious criminal behavior; legitimate protests against the abuse of women and the mistreatment of homosexuals exploded into a cacophony of witless demands for androgynous social policies; prudent concerns about industrial pollution were overtaken by the green bandwagon of tree-hugging fruitcakes and spongy opportunists.

Conservatives may chortle over the leftish tint of the sample entries in the foregoing catalogue, but they should notice the common denominator: what we're dealing with here is the downside of American individualism—in Sykes's phrase, "an ideology of the ego." When the advertising copy of business resonates with the claptrap of the New Age, or when the commentary of a prominent conservative like David Gergen starts buzzing with the language of "compassion" and "root causes," we've got trouble right here in River City.

What kind of trouble? Most of *A Nation of Victims* explores the origins and present character of American victimism, concentrating on the past half century. Sykes is wise enough to be tentative about causes and effects, but it seems clear that during the prosperous years following World War II, religious faith and "the bourgeois culture of character and denial" went into decline, opening the way for what Philip Rieff has called "the triumph of the therapeutic."

The religious tradition had demanded a surrender of self among pre-modern Americans, who instinctively grasped a paradox that came to be incomprehensible to modern generations. It is, in Christopher Lasch's words, "the central paradox of religious faith: that the secret of happiness lies in renouncing the right to be happy." The therapeutic culture, with its array of "helping professionals," rose in hostility to the religious impulse and asserted a "right to be happy." In place of restraint and self-denial, the therapeutic clerisy proposed "a culture of fulfillment whose horizons knew no limit but the appetite and ambition of the self."

Needless to say, horizons diminished quickly in such a culture, which actively discouraged transcendent reflection and reduced honest metaphysical anxiety to categories of emotional illness. In the therapeutic ethos, "compassion" became the chief value, understood "not as a sacred duty owed to God or man but as a way of refining one's sense of self-identity and self-awareness." And, one may add, a way of excusing such revolting trends as racial preferences in the market and political correctness in the academy.

For more than a generation now, we have been witnessing the cumulative political and social consequences of this ethos: a frantic emphasis of rights over responsibilities, a shallow reluctance to hold individuals accountable for their behavior, and "a national industry" for "the manufacture and elaboration of grievances," where the language of litigation is substituted for "the grammar of moral appeal." Sykes concludes by calling for "a moratorium on the politics of blame" and for the gradual creation of "a culture of character."

In his 1985 essay, Wilson averred that the public interest is legitimately served when schools induce the very young, by good example as well as by precept, to act "virtuously"—that is, "with due restraint on one's impulses, due regard for the rights of others, and reasonable concern for distant consequences." If it is to have a fighting chance, the kind of culture Sykes envisions will need an education system with a moral ballast heftier than the therapeutic gab sessions of today's classrooms. ❐

CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 10)

think Mr. Tyrrell really can do better than this) and acclaim as "superb" Pat Buchanan's call for religious and cultural war, you perpetuate the myopic bigotry that has for long tarred the right.

I don't expect all conservatives (libertarian or otherwise) to be as groundbreaking in their attitudes as Massachusetts Governor William Weld, but you might try to see the difference between opposing liberal nostrums and denigrating the dignity of fellow conservatives of whatever persuasion.

—Paul Woodward
New York, New York

Body by Fisher

In his review of Robert K. Massie's *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War* (*TAS*, September 1992), R. J. Stove argues that "the speed and firepower of [Sir John Fisher's] ships encouraged complacency about their thin armor, with disastrous results at Jutland." The statement is only partially true. The battle cruisers, which, strictly speaking, were not dreadnoughts, did indeed have thin belt and turret armor. However, the blowing up of HMS *Queen Mary*, *Indefatigable*, and *Invincible* and the near-destruction of HMS *Lion* resulted as much from carelessness about ammunition handling to attain a higher rate of fire as from thin armor. These ships had nothing to prevent flame in a burst turret from reaching the magazines deep within the hulls. The Germans learned earlier in the war from the Dogger Bank battle that anti-flash systems were absolutely essential to battle cruiser survival. The British learned the lesson only at Jutland.

What about the dreadnoughts themselves? The British lost only one of these behemoths during the war, HMS *Audacious*, from mines off the Irish coast in late October 1914. . . . As for Fisher, I have never before seen him referred to as unimaginative! Indeed, he has been criticized for having too much imagination. The idea of the all–big gun battleship had been in the air for several years. Fisher's genius was to steal a march by constructing HMS *Dreadnought* in the remarkably short time of twelve months. . . .

—Robert C. Whitten
Cupertino, California

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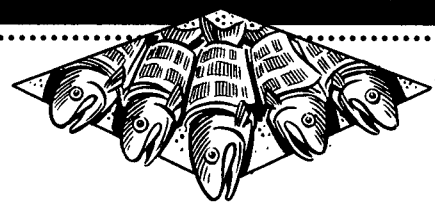

Star-Tribune
(Minneapolis, Minnesota)

A New Age Ku Kluxer, or just a benevolent idiot?

Each day I walk my dog around Round Lake and witness a scene that makes me sad. There is always a huge flock of geese cruising the shore, and always following a safe distance behind is a pretty albino that is perfectly white, alone and rejected by the flock.

My heart goes out to this little fellow. I think, here is a true example of prejudice based on color. Nature can teach us lessons, too. —*Madelyn K. Skarnes*
Eden Prairie

[September 16, 1992]

Leo

In the *Village Voice* of Louisville, Kentucky, poesy and hope from a homegrown Orwell:

The point about Bill Clinton is not that he looks like JFK—although he somehow did last week on Main Street. Youthful, sexy, surprisingly svelte in a charcoal double-breasted, with a bracing wind ruffling thick hair. . . .

To be among Clinton supporters is to see something deeper than partisan politics and so rare during the past 12 soul-deadening years that it's startling: hearts shamelessly worn on sleeves.

For the record, the feelings' right names are: optimism, idealism, compassion, diligence, justice, honor, courage. . . . That's what those who are responding to his challenge are feeling, have felt since the first time they listened to the man from Hope (!), and continue to feel, no matter what muck and dire threats are flung at him and them.

They don't know for sure whether Clinton can help them succeed in reclaiming their birthrights and their better selves—especially if Ross Dog-in-the-Manger Perot muddies the clear water through which a Clinton landslide will have to be interpreted.

But they do know for sure that George Herbert Veto Tax-Chiseler Bush won't.

[October 8-21, 1992]

Durango Herald
(Durango, Colorado)

A report on the rituals and mysteries attended to by a New Ager launched solemnly into pious post-atheism:

For Tim Slack, life is a series of drum journeys.

Slack is co-proprietor with Karen Gunderman of the Coyote-Bear Lodge. He and Gunderman conduct workshops in which participants create drums and rattles, and attempt to find their own avenues to a more spiritual life. Slack instructs in drum and rattle making, while Gunderman facilitates the ceremony. . . .

Making a drum is a deeply meaningful experience, according to Slack. "We begin with a brief drum journey," he said. That means that Slack performs a simple metronomic drumbeat, while the participants try to visualize the drum they want to make. They also familiarize themselves with the wood, rawhide, feathers, gourds, beads and other materials used in making drums and rattles. "We're trying to connect with the spirit place," Slack said.

"The process is full of metaphor," he added. "For example, when you stretch rawhide over your drum, you may also be stretching your life in new and larger ways."

[September 3, 1992]

Harper's

The expanding universe of Safe Sex:

Why would one engage in radical sex in the first place? Because there's a kind of catharsis in radical sex not present in conventional sex. If any application of pain is involved, one gets a release of endorphins, those wonderful internal opiates responsible for the high that runners experience. Moreover, I don't allow myself to be made helpless by anyone whom I suspect would not honor my signals to stop. Indeed, much of the appeal of radical sex is that in some ways it's an ultimate form of trust.

—*Jill Westerfelhaus*
Chicago

[July 1992]

Washington Post

At a learned conference christened "Race, Gender, and Power in America," Dr. Anita F. Hill casts her lot yet again with "analysis and careful thought":

But over the course of a year in which she has become a symbol of feminism in the courtroom and in politics, Hill said, "I began to understand how images based on stereotypes and myth are often substitutes for analysis and careful thought."

[October 17, 1992]

Pitzer College
(Letter to Alumni)

Letter from a bore, President Marilyn Chapin Massey:

. . . Let me assure you that as Pitzer College begins is twenty-ninth year, the educational mission—its focus on interdisciplinary and intercultural understanding and the commitment to examining the social and ethical implications of actions and policies—continues as a strong and unwavering vision. In a world of rapidly changing national boundaries and deepening political, economic, and social divisions, Pitzer continues to encourage students to question notions of boundaries and to create viable communities of diversity. . . . A commitment to a multiplicity of perspectives necessarily entails a commitment to breaking down the barriers that keep diverse perspectives from being seen, and diverse voices from being heard. Pitzer's commitment to breaking down these barriers brought me to this campus, and the expansion of the College's accessibility to all qualified applicants is one of the most important goals of my work as President. It has been a joy to meet the incoming members of the Class of 1996, and I have been encouraged to see the continuance of a rich diversity. . . . It is only through the active involvement of alumni and friends that Pitzer can be a truly effective instrument of leadership and change. . . .

[September 23, 1992]

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New York Post

Two years after the decade of greed, human sexuality cracks the whip:

And in this fiercely competitive profession, there's some bad-mouthing of rival houses—suggestions that mistresses elsewhere offer sex. Serious dominatrixes maintain that prostitution does not exist in the better houses.

"It would be a big insult to the mistress for a slave [customer] to even ask for sex," says Leslie. The request might make her so mad she'd stop beating him.

[October 20, 1992]

Scene

(Cleveland, Ohio)

In Cleveland's preeminent entertainment weekly, fierce gibbering from suburban metaphysicians of an esoteric persuasion:

Both Seager and Ritter are members of the Bohemian Women's Political Alliance, a grassroots group whose ranks include Ann Magnuson of Bongwater and Kira Roessler of Dos and Black Flag fame. Founded by activist Nicole Panter and former X vocalist Exene Cervenka earlier this year, BWPA has organized a benefit for California congresswoman Barbara Boxer and helped homeless people register to vote. Its statement of purpose proclaims: "We are the little girls your parents wouldn't let you play with . . ."

[October 1-7, 1992]

New York Times

From the dubiously named People for the American Way, an exigent fund-raising appeal, demonstrating yet again that the brain of the ritualistic liberal remains a haunted house:

DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY WITH IT.

THE RADICAL RIGHT. Suddenly they're back in the news. Dominating the Republican convention. Poisoning the election campaign with hate-filled messages.

What have they been up to these past few years? Truth is, they've been quitely regrouping at the grassroots, out of the spotlight. Dozens of organizations, recruiting thousands of followers, raising millions of dollars, spreading intolerance. And in a hurting and divided nation, that's dangerous.

But the PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY ACTION FUND takes on the Radical Right. Funded by Norman Lear, Barbara Jordan and others, our 300,000 members work hard to out-think and out-organize them.

[October 15, 1992]

Washington Post

Another indication that the Democratic party is transforming itself into a modern-day Lourdes:

On the "Today" show, Tipper Gore shows Katie Couric snapshots she has taken on the campaign trail, and says: "I have learned a lot, particularly the breadth of people that are out there. There are children. There are older people. There are people that come on oxygen."

The wife of the vice presidential candidate recalls how a woman came to Clinton, held his hand and tearfully said, "I changed my chemotherapy appointment so I could be here today . . ."

[October 23, 1992]

Windsong Messenger

(Boulder, Colorado)

From the 1992 Windsong Resource Directory, dream résumés for the Clinton-Rodham Administration:

Bernice Hill, Ph.D., Jungian Analyst. Bernice regularly incorporates in the rich symbolic work of Jungian analysis the core breathing and evocative music of holotropic breathwork developed by Stan and Christina Grof. Her main interest is working with those who are intent on discovering their own "path of the heart," the process of individuation. Member, International Association for Analytical Psychology. Insurance facilitated.

Laura Rieñé, Spiroenergetics. Inner dimensional experiential methods utilizing the arts to facilitate internal self-direction and expanded awareness. Practical processes for the everyday world. Harness aspects of your polarities into personality alignment for increased creative potential and purposeful productivity. Establish and maintain your own dynamic "Circle of Power," and smile your way to meaningful success. Center Star Communications. Private sessions, groups, seminars. $75/hour, sliding scale, group rates.

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Karen Smalley, Co-Creative Gardener with Nature Intelligences. Karen has 12 years of experience landscaping and gardening in the Boulder area. Her partnership with Devas and Nature Spirits enables her to take a new practical approach to homes and gardens. Karen specializes in specific energy processes for the land and homes using the Perelandra techniques, and offers consultation in overall land planning, garden design, and all landscape gardening services. She also teaches kinesiology as a tool for communication with Nature, and Flower Essence Therapy.

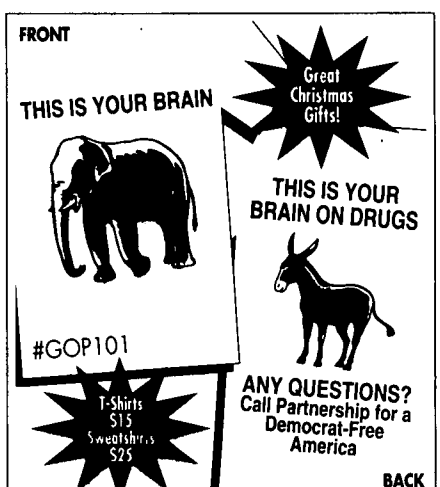
[Summer 1992]

Washington Post

Miss Sinéad O'Connor, the most stupefying mountebank since George Bernard Shaw, is good for one more barbaric yawp:

"It's my duty as a human being to use every means possible . . . to stop evil, which is child abuse," O'Connor said in the Vox interview. "The Jews in Germany would not have been exterminated if Hitler had not been abused as a child. Adolf Hitler wasn't a bad person; he was a very [screwed-up] person."

[October 6, 1992]



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THE TALKIES
(continued from page 61)

reality in their terms ever since, perhaps, Freud identified the id as "true psychic reality." Paradoxically, however, the single-minded pursuit of such "reality" by the image-makers leads to greater and greater *un*reality as the gap between art and *real* real life for both artist and audience becomes ever wider.

Take, for example, Medved's account of the famous Michael Jackson video "Black or White" in which the star simulated masturbation and smashed a car window with a crowbar. When there was a public outcry following its broadcast on television, Jackson changed the offensive bits and said: "It upsets me to think that 'Black or White' could influence any child or adult to destructive behavior, either sexual or violent. I've always tried to be a good role model and therefore have made these changes to avoid any possibility of affecting any individual's behavior."

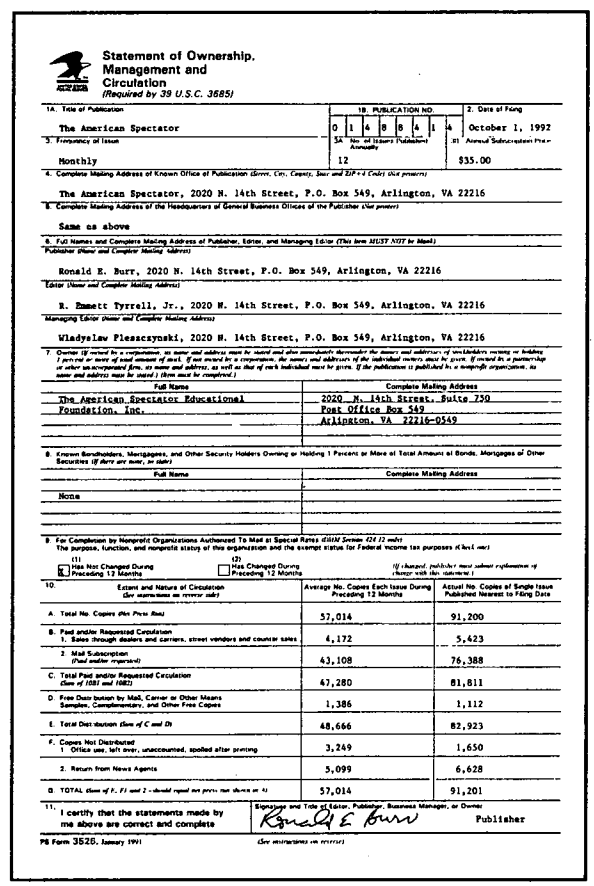
Medved sees only that public pressure on an entertainer made him withdraw offensive material, not what on earth the industry thinks it is doing if it is axiomatic that it has no intention "of affecting any individual's behavior." What this seems to mean is that the world of manufactured images is to be considered complete fantasy and nothing whatever to do with real life. All the emotions it evokes are only valid inside it and are not meant to escape the artist's hermetic seal. Similar things were said last spring when the rap artists Ice-T and Sister Souljah were taken to task for recordings and statements that advocated, as it seemed, the killing of police and of white people in general. Although the language of both performers was completely unambiguous, both denied that they had meant what they had said.

The sad thing is that this is probably true. The artists themselves, like their corporate apologists and large segments of their audience, simply assume that there is no connection between the fantasies that are their business and real life. The black rappers are addressing a different audience in different rhetoric and with a different purpose, but they depend on the same disjunction between art and life that has been insisted on by the producers of violent movies. Neither would be possible without the 12-year-old girl whose remarks, apropos of *Total Recall*, Medved quotes: "I can't say that it's violent, really. It's pretty funny to see people getting shot in the head."

Medved rather misstates his case against violence. He's right to draw a distinction between violent films that people seem to enjoy for the sake of the violence and those which, like the violence in Shakespeare, "affirm the humanity of the victim." But is it really true that the thrill violence fans get comes from enjoying "the feel of killing, beating, mutilating"? Why should they feel that any more than what it is like to be killed, beaten, or mutilated? The point is that these things numb rather than enhance feeling. Seeing someone shot in the head *is* funny if all your nerves have been disconnected. Medved is right to complain about the dehumanization of the victims of violence in films, but this would not be so easy to do if the audience had not been dehumanized first.

I believe that that dehumanization is accomplished by sentimentalism, which is another name for the disconnect between feelings and real life, and by the corrupting effect of too much fantasy on the imagination. Images of violence by themselves will not do it, but the belief that spending hours every day in Fantasyland is harmless "entertainment" will. Until the artistic notion of reality and the common sense one get back into alignment our national cultural life will remain in a perilous condition.

Medved's solution to the problem is basically that if everybody bands together in pressure groups, enough economic force can be brought to bear on Hollywood to produce the kind of pictures the pressure groups want. This might be called the congressional plan: send in enough lobbyists and you'll get what you want. But whether you are thus fragmenting the common interest or the common culture, if everything is a matter of competing pressure groups, who is left to look after the commonality? Neither the country nor the culture is just the sum of its interests; there is also the interest of the whole which, if it is not pursued naturally and voluntarily by people whose chief concern it is, will not be pursued at all. ❐



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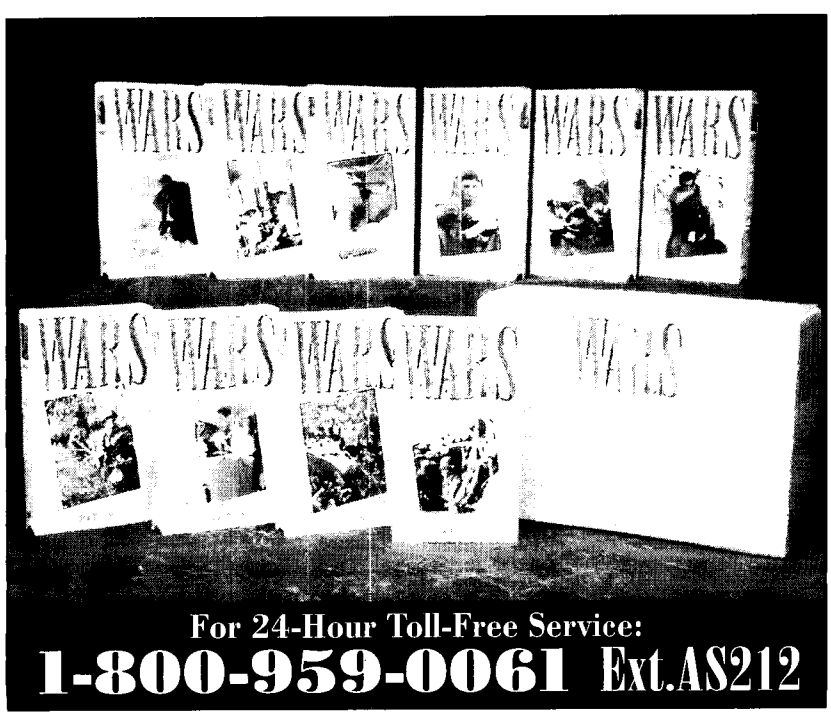

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